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March 1980
Number 178
SIVANA
DAVE HUNT

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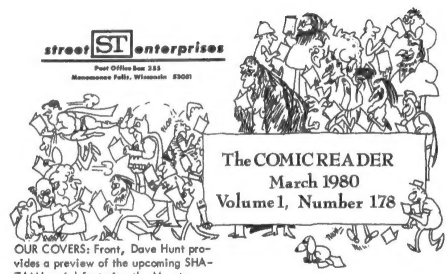
Post Office Box 255
Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin 53051



The COMIC READER
March 1980
Volume 1, Number 178

OUR COVERS: Front, Dave Hunt provides a preview of the upcoming SHAZAM! serial featuring the Monster Society of Evil with a portrait of Mary Marvel vs. Mr. Mind and Dr. Sivana; while the back is an editorial opinion on the requests for a new costume for Red Tornado. Both are © 1980, DC Comics Inc.

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BACK ISSUES: TCR #94-96, 98, 100-111, 113, 116, 118, 120-124, 126-128, 131, 133-139, 142, 143 are 50¢ each. #145-151, 153, 154, 156-163 are 75¢ each. #164, 165, 167-171, 173-177 are $1.25 each. (Issues #164-177 feature the GAZETTE.) Issues not listed are sold out. When ordering in quantity, include 50¢ postage for each ten issues.

Editor & Publisher - Jerome Sinkovec
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
North America [Second Class Mail]
6 issues: $4.75 12 issues: $9.00
Sample Copy: $1.25
North America [First Class Mail]
6 issues: $7.75 12 issues: $15.00
Europe, South America [Air Mail]
6 issues: $12.00 12 issues: $23.00
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6 issues: $13.80 12 issues: $26.60
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WHOLESALE ORDERS: Worldwide distribution of TCR is handled by New Media/Irjax Distributors, #H4 1675 Starkey Road, Largo, FL 33540. Toll-free number: (800) 237-5991. Contact them for all pertinent information.

SUBSCRIPTION AND MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 255, Menomonee Falls, WI 53051. No Canadian or foreign checks accepted.

THE COMIC READER [USPS No. 474-630] is published monthly by Street Enterprises, N92 W17420 Appleton Avenue, Menomonee Falls, WI 53051. Phone: (414)251-6933. Printed by Shinners Publications, Inc. Entire contents, except where otherwise noted are © 1979 by Street Enterprises. Second class postage paid at Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. Unsolicited material should be accompanied by return postage.

Marvel News

SHOGUN WARRIORS has been cancelled, the final issue being #20. Its place on the schedule will be taken by a new book which will be announced shortly. There has been talk of reviving Ka-Zar, and he could be involved.

As you may notice, the issue of MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL which was to feature the debut of THE DAZZLER has been changed, with the feature getting its own book beginning this month. As always, its frequency is monthly.

There's talk of doing new material for SGT. FURY, and there will be a romance issue of MARVEL SPOTLIGHT!

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For one month in the fall, Marvel will test the waters by upping the price on the entire line for the month to 75¢, adding a sixteen page signature and eight to ten pages of story to the books. The extra pages will be devoted to a series called "The Secrets Behind..." which will star whoever stars in each book. This includes the reprint titles. At the same time, a $100,000 contest will be announced in the line.

The annual schedule has been (as always) tentatively announced, with the probable release months detailed:
May: THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #2 by Ralph Macchio and Jim Mooney;
June: MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #5 featuring The Thing and The Hulk; THE INCREDIBLE HULK #9 by Doug Moench, Steve Ditko and Al Milgrom;
July: FANTASTIC FOUR #15; THE MICRONAUTS #2 by Bill Mantlo, Rich Buckler and another penciller (see below);
August: X-MEN #4, MARVEL TEAM-

UP #3 with The Hulk, Power Man, Iron Fist and Machine Man; September: THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #14 (with a five page AUNT MAY story).

There will be no GHOST RIDER ANNUAL this year after all, with the announced ideas for that book going instead into the regular monthly.

Rich Buckler bowed out of THE MICRONAUTS second annual after penciling the first ten pages. A replacement was not found by press-time.

We missed listing MARVEL TREASURY EDITION No. 25 last month, which featured the Spider-Man Vs. The Hulk at the Winter Olympics story mentioned previously. It was by Bill Mantlo, Mark Gruenwald, Steve Grant, Herb Trimpe and Bruce Patterson, with Al Milgram and Jack Abel doing the front cover, and Bill Sienkiewicz and Patterson the back. #26, out this month, features the HULK; #27 will be SPIDER-MAN including a never-before-published ANGEL story by Scott Edelman, Brent Anderson and Bob McLeod; with #28 tentatively scheduled to be the Summer Olympics companion to #25, but if politics interfere with the real thing, all references to the Olympics will be edited out. That's the issue where every Marvel hero extant will appear in one giant mob scene.

The abovementioned MARVEL TEAM-UP ANNUAL will be by Roger Stern and John Byrne. (Sounds like a vaudeville team, doesn't it? "Laugh and learn with Stern and Byrne..." heh, heh.)

Al Milgrom will become editor of MARVEL SPOTLIGHT with #9. Upcoming features include the aforementioned romance issue and a CAPTAIN UNIVERSE (from the MICRONAUTS book) solo story by Bill Mantlo and Steve Ditko.

Meanwhile, they've figured out what they're gonna do with DOCTOR WHO. A try-out appearance or two will be featured in MARVEL PREMIERE using the Mills & Wagner/Dave Gibbons stories appearing in the British weekly. Gibbons has done a couple of covers for the initial issues already.

The artwork for THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK will be by Al Williamson with an inking assist from Carlos Garzon, most recently the artist on the FLASH GORDON comic book.

Following this "who's who" of art assignments on THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN (John Byrne in #206, Jim Mooney in #207, John Romita, Jr. in #208 and Alan Weiss in #209), the permanent team on the book will be Denny O'Neil and John Romita, Jr. Which will mean that father and son (John Romita is artist on the syndicated strip) will be regular artists on the same feature.

Roy Thomas will be giving up the scripting of THOR with #297. He'll plot #298 and 299 with script by Mark Gruenwald and Ralph Macchio, and the latter pair will do full story on #300-301, which wrap up the eighteen-issue storyline which began in #283.

CAPTAIN AMERICA #255, rather than #250, will be a double-sized issue since it marks Cap's 40th anniversary. (THOR #300 will also be a double-sized issue.) #250 will not be ordinary, though: Cap runs for president! (Who wouldn't vote for a guy named Captain America, I ask you?) Apparently, though, he won't win; a WHAT IF? issue which will appear later will have the story of him becoming president.

Mary Jo Duffy is writing a one-shot ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI comic book for the Franciscan Community Board which John Buscema will pencil and ink and Marie Severin will color. It will be distributed on the newsstands.

The second issue of EPIC ILLUSTRATED will feature a cover by Richard Corben as well as a new story by Samuel (Chip) Delaney and Howard Chaykin.

Frank Miller and Alan Weiss have done fill-in issues of CAPTAIN AMERICA.

The third proposed album for collectors (after the X-MEN and PRISONER albums) is to co-star Daredevil and Dracula, rather than Daredevil and Doctor Strange, according to Cat Yronwode in THE BUYER'S GUIDE. Also according to Cat, problems over the ownership of the PRISONER because someone lost the paper that says Hanna-Barbera -- of all people -- own the licensing rights to the series, may cause a delay in getting that album into the shops.

Lever Bros. published an ALL give-away comic featuring reprints of SPIDER-MAN which you may be able to acquire through your local comics shop for an unreasonable sum, or at the supermarket for free with ALL detergent.

And lastly, former Marvel scripter and ground-level comics publisher Mike Friedrich has returned to Marvel to take a newly created position: liason to direct-sales markets. He'll be directing the marketing of those collectors' albums as well as new projects.

TCR Message

Paulette Carroll, whose ASTERIX series of articles have appeared in these pages, has been ill for the past few months and we'd just like to wish her the best and hope she gets well soon.

Oops! In last issue's Cat Yronwode's SPIRIT OF THE SPIRIT, on page 20, I've rendered a paragraph into incomprehensible garbage. Here's what line eighteen through twenty-five should have said: "For example, the Eisner-scripted "Jewel of Death" (aka "The Spirit in Damascus, 7/20/41) tells the tale of an ex-patriot American named Dr. Gregg and his fatal marriage to Sheik Ali Bey's daughter, the beautiful dancer Shellah, who wears on her forehead The Jewel of Death. Under Feiffer's hands, the refried version of this story ("The Jewel of Gizeh," February 26, 1950) still features Dr. Gregg --

[Continued on page 15]

DC News

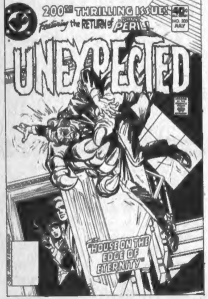
DC will be eliminating all house ads except in their dollar titles (which will be the only home for the DAILY PLANET pages) as well as the classified ad pages to make room in their 32-page package when the line goes to 50¢ with 25 pages of story in June.

DC has cancelled ALL-OUT WAR with #6, and made G.I. COMBAT a monthly dollar book. None of the continuing features presently appearing in AOW will appear in GIC at the present time, however.

The NEW TEEN TITANS strip will debut first in DC COMICS PRESENTS #26 as a 16-page bonus comic at no extra charge before going to its own book in August. Old members of the group will be Robin, Kid Flash and Wonder Girl with Beast Boy returning as The Changeling and new members Cyborg (a black half-robot character), Raven (a girl with mental and martial powers) and Starfire (an alien who projects power blasts -- unrelated to the old Starfire) and joining Marv Wolfman on the art will be George Perez, who will be regular penciller on the TT book.

Speaking of characters with old names, the back-up character for THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD, originally announced as IMMORTAL MAN, has apparently been rechristened NEMESIS, no relation, we trust, to the character published by ACG (to which DC owns the foreign reprint rights). Cary Burkett will script and Dan Spiegle will be regular artist.

The back-up for SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE has been named: MR. E, created by Jack C. Harris and Bob Rozakis, and scripted by Rozakis. It and JOHNNY PERIL and THE GHOST-BREAKER will debut in the respective mystery titles in December cover-dated issues on sale in September.



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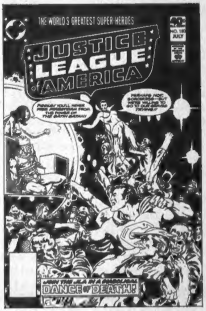
The western title in the works from editor Ross Andru and writer Mike Fleisher will be drawn by new DC addition Gerald Fortun. Fortun is from France and recently began work on a BLACK LIGHTNING story for DETECTIVE. Andru, in the meantime, is slowly pencilling a JONAH HEX story.

THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #167 will team the Earth-Two wartime Batman with the (naturally) wartime Blackhawks. Written by Marv Wolfman, Dave Cockrum is handling the art as a fill-in for Jim Aparo who returns to the book with #168, which features Batman and Green Arrow.

AQUAMAN is now the lead (cover feature) of ADVENTURE COMICS, with the STARMAN and PLASTIC MAN strips becoming the back-ups.

The guest-stars in this year's annual JLA/JSA team-up tale in JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA will be the Fourth World characters from The New Gods, Forever People and Mr. Miracle.

J.M. DeMatteis's first RED TORNADO story in WORLD'S FINEST #265 will feature a newly reorganized version of Red's origin story and will



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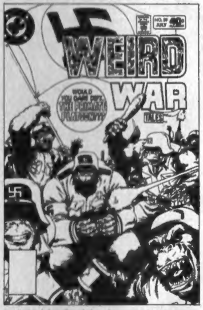
be drawn by Jose Delbo. DeMatteis plans to locate RT in New York's Greenwich Village (in his secret I.D. as John Smith) with Kathy Sutton and Traya remaining the supporting cast, and T.R. Morrow becoming the first major villain. He also intends to explore the reasons why a machine knocked off by Morrow in a fit of mania ended up so incredibly human. He promises that he WON'T be a reincarnation of the original Human Torch.

In this month's installment of surprise guest star announcements, Jack C. Harris plans to bring back The Enchantress (from STRANGE ADVENTURES) in a SUPERGIRL story in a future SUPERMAN FAMILY. And Marv Wolfman plans a crossing-of-paths of a future Green Lantern with Rick Starr, the Space Ranger. The previously mentioned return of Eclipso will occur in GREEN LANTERN #135-136, as Bruce Gordon is hired by Ferris Aircraft.

Pat Broderick and John Celardo are the artists on at least the first two CREATURE COMMANDOS stories appearing in WEIRD WAR TALES. J.M. DeMatteis did the writing.

New inkers have been assigned to WONDER WOMAN: Dave Hunt will switch over from LEGION to ink Jose Delbo's pencils on WW, while Steve Mitchell has been signed on as regular inker of the HUNTRESS feature



scripted by Paul Levitz, and presumably also pencilled by Delbo, though we might be wrong about that.

Brian Bolland has done more work following his successful debut as a GREEN LANTERN cover artist. He'll be doing a story for TIME WARP and he's done the cover to the #475th issue of ADVENTURE, which announces Aquaman's return to the book.

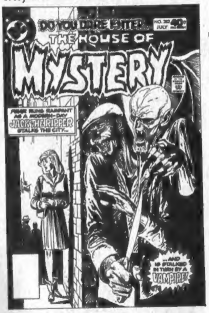
Another new artist at DC is Rodin Rodriguez, who is pencilling an ADAM STRANGE story originally scripted by Jack C. Harris as a STAR HUNTERS back-up. It appears in GREEN LANTERN #132; with #133 Laurie Sutton becomes regular writer of the series.

Slated to appear in DC COMICS PRESENTS #26's "Whatever Happened To..." story is Sargon the Sorcerer.

Rich Buckler has done a six-pager for the back of NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY and is working on a story for the WORLD OF KRYPTON feature in SUPERMAN.

A 25-page story for THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #268 written by J.M. DeMatteis is being pencilled by Steve Ditko and inked by Bob Wiacek. The story focuses on Chameleon Boy, Karate Kid, Dream Girl and a new villain called Doctor Mayavale, a spritual lunatic who claims to have knowledge of all his past lives.

Also for the LEGION, an eight page back-up story drawn by Steve Ditko and inked by Dave Hunt. This may be the Bouncing Boy-Duo Damsel story mentioned elsewhere.



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The contents of DC SPECIAL BLUE RIBBON DIGEST #4 and THE BEST OF DC #7 have been announced. The former features GREEN LANTERN and includes "Planet of Doomed Men" (GL #1), "The Power Ring That Vanished" (GL #5), "The Secret Life of Star Sapphire" (GL #16), "Zero Hour In The Silent City" (GL #12), "Two Green Lanterns In The Family" (GL #53) and "Secret Origin of the Guardians" (GL #40), all written by John Broome, with art by Gil Kane, Carmine Infantino, Murphy Anderson, Joe Giella and Sid Greene.

THE BEST OF DC #7 spotlights SUPERBOY and features "Superboy Meets the Young Green Arrow" (ADVENTURE #258) by George Papp; "Super-Clown of Smallville" (SUPERBOY #62) by Craig Flessel; "Dark Strangler of the Seas" (SB #171) by Frank Robbins, Bob Brown and Murphy Anderson; "The Millionaire of Smallville" (SB #119), "Superboy Meets Lois Lane" (SB #261) by Otto Binder and Papp; "Plague From the Past" (SB #177) by Leo Dorfman, Brown and Anderson; "Lex Luthor, Imp" (SB #131) by Papp; "The Kryptonite Kid" (SB #99) by Jerry Siegel and Papp; and "Superboy Meets Supergirl" (SB #80) by Siegel, Curt Swan and John Forte.

Ric Estrada is doing layouts for a Cary Burkett story for WORLD'S FINEST #265 which brings back Simon

Magus, villain of JUSTICE LEAGUE #2, to battle Superman, Batman and Robin.

Covers for mystery books seem to be Michael Kaluta's forte, and he has recently racked up GHOSTS #93, SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE #29, UNEXPECTED #203, and his usual cover assignment, TIME WARP #7, all of which are out in July.

J.M. DeMatteis and Dick Giordano will be the team doing the AQUAMAN strip in ADVENTURE and the new storyline will concern a new mystery involving Mera and some old and new villains: The Scavenger, the Black Manta and Poseidon.

Allied Telecommunications has issued the first in a series of working telephones based on DC characters. Out now is Superman (we know because our friend Ron Massengill, a huge Superman fan, has one -- #5) in a numbered limited edition, and scheduled for issuance are Batman and Wonder Woman.

Western Publishing may be uninterested in newsstand distribution, but they remain interested in DC characters who appear there. Besides continuing their distribution of DCs in plastic bags they've announced a few new

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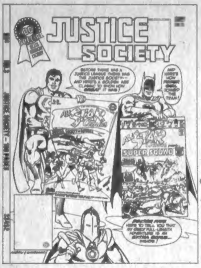
books and things using DC characters: a SUPERMAN Big Little Book will appear this year in a story written by E. Nelson Bridwell and drawn by Joe Staton; a series of coloring books are scheduled for later this year written by DC writers Bridwell, George Kashdan, Bob Rozakis, Mike Fleisher, Laurie Sutton and Karen Berger, with Redondo Studio artwork and covers by Staton and Dick Giordano (separately); also planned is a 448 page Activity Book using material from old coloring books and puzzles by Bob Rozakis published previously in DC comics; as well as a sticker book with art by Staton.

Random House's LITTLE LIBRARY of SUPERMAN's life should be appearing soon, as will a WONDER WOMAN Pop-Up Book similar to the SUPERMAN one published last year, and a punch-out book featuring models of the Batmobile and Batplane.

The BATMAN movie will be co-financed by the Casablanca Filmworks and will have a budget of $15,000,000, according to an article in THE VILLAGE VOICE. W.D. Richter, who adapted INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS and DRACULA for their recent releases, will be working on the script. Casting has yet to be announced.

Meanwhile, the SUPERMAN II movie may or may not make the June, '80 release date. If it misses this summer, it will be held until the summer of '81. Meantime, if you want a videocassette of SUPERMAN I, it'll cost you $69.95 and you won't be able to rent it from Warner Home Video.

DC Managing Editor Joe Orlando will be travelling cross-country this summer visiting the various comic conventions and will be actively seeking new artists for the DC line. DC emphasizes that this will be a true, concerted effort, and that all details will be forthcoming.



Finally, I'm proud to announce that I (Mike Tiefenbacher) have finally realized a lifelong ambition -- I've sold my first comics story. It's called "Whatever Happened to Johnny Thunder" and it will eventually appear in an issue of DC COMICS PRESENTS in the WHATEVER HAPPENED TO... series, obviously. (This is the western Johnny, not the one with the pink thunderbolt pal.) It answers a question that has bothered a few people since 1961: What would have happened in ALL-STAR WESTERN #120? And I hope it proves to be worth the eleven years it's taken me to sell my first story. (I know I'M still on cloud nine!)

Whitman News

There apparently has been a further revision of the Whitman schedule, as four books originally slated to appear in April (BATTLE OF THE PLANETS #7, BEETLE BAILEY #133, BUCK ROGERS #8 and DAFFY DUCK #129) have been removed from the month's schedule. We're attempting to find out what's going on; in the meantime, anyone who sees any of the new bags in their area, please contact us and tell us what's in them.

Coming Comics

Walt Disney DONALD DUCK No. 220, June. Reprints. [4/3]

Walt Disney MICKEY MOUSE No. 206, June. Reprints. [4/3]

Walt Disney UNCLE SCROOGE No. 177, June. Reprints. [4/3]

YOSEMITE SAM No. 66, June. New. [4/3]

Walt Disney DAISY AND DONALD No. 44, June. New. [4/10]

LOONEY TUNES No. 32, June. New. [4/10]

TOM AND JERRY No. 329, June. Reprints. [4/10]

WALT DISNEY'S COMICS AND STORIES No. 477, June. Half new, half reprints. [4/10]

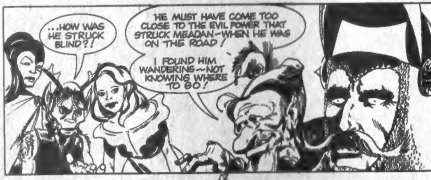
Walt Disney CHIP 'N' DALE No. 66, June. Reprints. [4/24]

Walt Disney WINNIE-THE-POOH No. 19, June. New, with ads. [4/24]

by a powerful spell. Jean-Claude St. Aubin did the art and character designs with Richard Comely providing the script; George Freeman did the cover. [4/8]

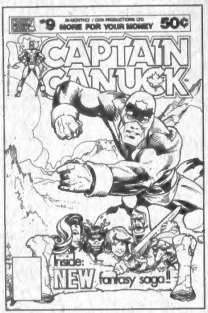
Warren News

Will Richardson (DuBay) is now Senior Editor at Warren, with Chris Adames moving up to Managing Editor.


...HOW WAS HE STRUCK BLIND?
HE MUST HAVE COME TOO CLOSE TO THE EVIL POWER THAT STRUCK MEADAN--WHEN HE WAS ON THE ROAD!
I FOUND HIM WANDERING--NOT KNOWING WHERE TO GO!

Comely Comics

CAPTAIN CANUCK No. 9, May-June. "Space-Watch/Death-Watch Part 2" is by Richard Comely and George Freeman with coloring by Jean-Claude St. Aubin. The back-up in this issue is the first episode of a new feature called BEYOND.



Described as a sythesis of the quest, the fairy tale and the world of enchanted fantasy, it involves five individuals of varying appearances (see illustrations) called Fen, Lady Elodil, Rian, Sandynar and Sir Brant of the Order of Toth in the land of Tamarand searching for their village which has been spirited away

Coming Comics

1994 No. 12, May. This issue features "The Seed" by Will Richardson and Alex Nino; "Jailbreak On Channel 69" by Bob Toomey and Jose Gonzalez; "Over Four Billion Served" by Kevin Duane and DeLando; "Starfire Saga, Part 4" by Richardson and Rudy Nebres; "Ghita" by Frank Thorne; and "Baby Makes Three, Part 1" by Duane and Abel Laxamana. [3/18]

EERIE No. 111, May. "Blood On Black Satin" is by Doug Moench and Paul Gulacy, and leads off an issue which features "Moto Psycho Cop" by Nick Cuti, John Garcia and Rudy Nebres; "Samaurai: The Messenger" by Larry Hama and Val Mayerik; "Mac Tavish: Fifty Million Spacemen Can't Be Wrong" by Jim Stenstrum and Pepe Moreno-Casaures; and "Hackster" by Victor de la Fuentes. [3/25]

VAMPIRELLA No. 87, June. [4/8]

CREEPY No. 118, June. [4/15]

FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND No. 164, June. [4/15]

1994 No. 13, June. [4/22]

ROOK No. 3, June. [4/22]

Archie Coming Co...

Archie may be expanding its Digest Comics line with a series of one-

shots. SABRINA and SUPER DUCK books may kick-off the series.

Little Archie meets the Abominable Snowman in LITTLE ARCHIE #155, courtesy of Bob Bolling.

JUGHEAD JONES DIGEST #13 reprints the complete 1957 issue of JUGHEAD'S FOLLY (going for around $8.00 a copy these days), a novel-length adventure in which Jughead becomes an Elvis Presley-like star of the rock world. The book also features a GINGER story from the '40s.

SUZIE, a fan favorite from the '40s, appears in ARCHIE COMICS DIGEST #42. KATY KEENE is featured in JUGHEAD WITH ARCHIE DIGEST #39. And COSMO THE MERRY MARTIAN and PIPSQUEAK show up in LAUGH COMICS DIGEST #29.

BINGO, that wild and wacky (but we all love him) WILKIN BOY, will be appearing regularly in both LAUGH and PEP.

ARCHIE AND ME No. 119, June. [3/25]

ARCHIE'S JOKEBOOK No. 269, June. [3/25]

ARCHIE'S PALS 'N' GALS No. 141, June. [3/25]

BETTY AND VERONICA No. 294, June. [3/25]

PEP No. 362, June. [3/25]

ARCHIE No. 293, June. [4/1]

JUGHEAD No. 301, June. [4/1]

LAUGH No. 351, June. [4/1]

ARCHIE AT RIVERDALE HIGH No. 72, June. [4/8]

JOKEBOOK COMICS DIGEST ANNUAL No. 6, June. [4/8]

JUGHEAD JONES COMICS DIGEST No. 13, June. [4/8]

LITTLE ARCHIE No. 155, June. This issue features the Bob Bolling Abominable Snowman story. [4/8]

ARCHIE COMICS DIGEST No. 42, June. [4/15]

BETTY AND VERONICA SPECTACULAR No. 494, June. [4/15]

EVERYTHING'S ARCHIE No. 84, June. [4/15]

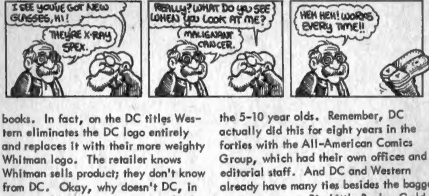
SABRINA THE TEEN-AGE WITCH No. 60, June. [4/15]

Comment

This is going to be a very strange sounding COMMENT, one that is certainly without precedent in these pages, and one that appears to be remarkably presumptuous of me. But I think it's something important enough to bring up, in the small chance that someone will actually hear of it and think about it.

Simply put, I believe I have a solution of some logic to prevent the imminent demise of Western Publishing's viability as a comics group. I'm sure that we're all agreed that the current situation, with Western comics being distributed only through chain stores and with print run, frequency and amount of new material cut to the bone, isn't a good one. What I propose is a means by which Western could return to the normal newsstand distribution channels without actually having to deal with the problems of their 25% sale rate.

We know that Western's strength lies in its coloring and juvenile book distribution network and not in newsstand distribution. We know also that Western has signed contracts with both DC and Marvel to distribute their comics in the plastic-bagged format, even going so far as to having their own part of the press-run of each overprinted to differentiate them from the newsstand


HI & SY "THOSE GOOFY GEEZERS"
by BORIS TOTIERS
I SEE YOU'VE GOT NEW GLASSES, HI!
THEY'RE X-RAY SPEX.
WELL!? WHAT DO YOU SEE WHEN YOU LOOK AT ME?
MALIGNANT CANCER.
HEH HEH! WORKS EVERY TIME!!

books. In fact, on the DC titles Western eliminates the DC logo entirely and replaces it with their more weighty Whitman logo. The retailer knows Whitman sells product; they don't know from DC. Okay, why doesn't DC, in what would amount to returning the favor, take over newsstand distribution of Western's remaining titles, overprinting the DC logo on them?

Before someone starts shouting anti-trust or something (of which I know nothing, and am therefore skirting), just think about the logic in this. DC has had no funny animal line since the late '50s, and their humor line has been next to nill since 1970. Unlike Marvel, their line hovers around thirty and would thus not be the loser of newsstand space by Whitman's presence on the newsstand -- space which, if not occupied by more titles, may very well find itself lost to non-comic magazines (how many crossword puzzle and astrology magazines have you seen crammed in the comic rack recently?). This kind of setup, in which the print-run of the comics is increased, the price increased to DC's 50¢ level, and advertising is sold on a combined basis, with DC's Independent News handling the distribution, seems to be mutually advantageous to both companies. The relationship does have a basis in industry.

In the record business there is almost as much trouble with distribution and returns as in the comics industry, and if you're a small or even a sizable company with independent distribution, it's almost impossible to make a go of it. The licensed label was established long ago to keep the small label in existence without giving it the headaches connected with distribution by having a larger label handle its manufacture and distribution. This is essentially what A&M Records did last year when they dropped their independence to sign on with RCA. They retain their autonomy, but both companies now gain by their sales. A&M is a major company but simply found itself unable to compete by itself -- which is exactly where the Western comics operation is.

The circulation of the Whitman Comics would rise. DC would gain the prestige of having the Walt Disney and Warner Bros. comics under their imprint and add an age group to their line that they probably do not have at the mament, the 5-10 year olds. Remember, DC actually did this for eight years in the forties with the All-American Comics Group, which had their own offices and editorial staff. And DC and Western already have many ties besides the bagged comics contract: Big Little Books, Golden Books, coloring books, activity books, etc. And DC is stronger in the newsstand marketplace than Western, meaning the books might actually appear in the many markets they have not in recent years.

So there is a basis here in logic and a precedent. It seems like the way to go, and it certainly would be a shame if Western ended up on the list of comics groups who have thrown in the towel.

– MLT

Media Review

What's new on the comic strip-film industry? Well, latest stuff on SUPERMAN and BATMAN is in the DC News section for some reason. The only thing I have to add is that Richard Lester says that he will have the thing edited by March, which is the deadline to get it out this year... John Belushi has been named to star in the ALLEY OOP film mentioned here a couple of months ago. Some columnist mentioned that Belushi would be playing much the same character as his ANIMAL HOUSE and 1941 character; apparently they've never read ALLEY OOP, as Alley is quite loquacious... The rest of the POPEYE cast has been named and the only really recognizable names beyond the already-announced cast are Ray Walston, Richard Libertini and Donald Moffatt... David Begelman and MGM are now the people doing TARZAN, with John Derek producing and Bo Derek starring as Jane. This is apparently not the same as the Robert Towne GREYSTOKE project... The CONAN (as well as the DUNE) movie being done by Dino DeLaurentiis will be filmed entirely in Europe... Not a movie but a Broadway play is being readied starring Bernadette Peters as BETTY BOOP. The musical (whose main character was based on real-life singer Helen Kane) will probably have music by Marvin Hamlisch... Most surprising film-based-on-comics for the month is a pilot, an animated version of Western Publishing's DOCTOR SOLAR, MAN OF THE ATOM, for network buy or syndication from Ziv International Inc. Solar last appeared in his own book in 1969, although he last appeared in DR. SPEKTOR in a cameo in 1976... HM Communications is suing Michael Klinger (an English film-maker) over the movie-title rights to HEAVY METAL. HM wants to use their magazine name for their own animated film... And don't be surprised if Roger Moore does not play James Bond in the next episode, FOR YOUR EYES ONLY. Producer Cubby Broccoli is haggling with Moore's agent claiming Moore wants too much to reprise his role, and making overtures about how anybody can play Bond and be a success at it...

On the television front, there are very few pilots of interest. ABC does have a pilot from Warner Bros. written and produced by Reinhold Wedge about a "hip young guy" who finds himself reluctantly endowed with super-powers (an hour adventure show). Also from ABC is what must be the first three-camera western, BEST OF THE WEST, from John Charles Walters Productions (Stan Daniels and Ed. Weinberger, the TAXI producers). Yes it's a sitcom... CBS pilots include GUMSHOES (from QM Productions) about a male-female pair of twins who inherit their father's P.I. business -- and pop returns to help them as a ghost; three MTM pilots, BROTHERS (about two brothers living together in New York), FOR BETTER OR WORSE (a children's book writer marries a widower with a thirteen year old son), and the most promising, BUREAU, written and produced by Gary David Goldberg (LOU GRANT, THE LAST RESORT) which is about war correspondents in Viet Nam -- all are sitcoms... Another ABC pilot which may be more palatable than recent attempts at conquering the genre, is

ONCE UPON A SPY from David Gerber Productions (POLICE STORY)which features a computer scientist who reluctantly turns spy with the aid of a sexy (presumably female) partner... Ten STAR TREK episodes will be available on RCA videodiscs when they're introduced next year. They'll be one per side, and unlike the syndicated versions we're getting on commercial TV, unedited. Included for sure is "The Menagerie," although it's a safe bet that "The Trouble With Tribbles," "City on the Edge of Forever" and "Where No Man Has Gone Before" will very likely be among others included... For us western fans, BRANDED and WILL SONNETT will be combined in a syndicated ninety-minute package called CHUCK CONNORS' GREAT WESTERN THEATRE. Unfortunately, they're cutting the opening credits off -- which means you won't see Chuck's (Major McCord's, that is) sword broken in half, his epaulets ripped off, and that great BRANDED theme song won't be heard... The new GALACTICA '80 program has been picked up for ten more episodes this season, and may even have been renewed for next season (the VARIETY article's typically vague). My reaction to the new format is mixed; I like the aliens-meet-Earthmen bits of humor, and Kent McCord and Barry Van Dyke are okay, but the time-travelling bit seems like it'll be the same kind of thematic cul-de-sac as the old format. And I do think that the casual dismissal of the deaths of his children (Athena and Apollo) and other members of the crew who have yet to return (it's all ambiguous at the moment) by Adama in this version is a kick in the teeth to most of the former fans of the show, which isn't gonna help much. I do like the addition of humor, though... THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES was excellently made (though I can't vouch for the adaptation's accuracy, as I've never read the book -- Bradbury was unhappy, though), and was out of the ordinary run of recent science fiction movies in that there was a lot to think about. A bit too pessimistic for my taste, though (most of the human species was destroyed, after all)... Another fine effort was PBS's recent film, THE LATHE OF HEAVEN. It will probably be rerun later this year, so watch for it -- it too requires some thinking to understand, and the effects are pretty good for TV (and PBS).

DePatie-Freleng has broken up, with David DePatie and Friz Freleng going their separate ways over conflict of creative ideas (maybe Friz got mad enough about the lack of quality in his Warner Bros. specials). No word as yet who'll get custody of SPIDER-WOMAN if they renew it... Neivana Productions (INTERGALACTIC THAKSGIVING, COSMIC CHRISTMAS, ROMIE-O AND JULIE-8 and the STAR

WARS cartoon) are doing five animated cartoon specials to be syndicated by Viacom based on sports, keyed to appear in the appropriate seasons. The first, scheduled to be ready for World Series time, is THE DAY THE EARTH MADE THE PLAY-OFFS, a science fiction baseball cartoon which is said to promote fair play (where's Mr. Terrific now, when we need him?). It sounds a bit like STRANGE SPORTS STORIES, eh?

Latest Python work: Graham Chapman, who has avoided U.S. television appearances other than interviews, is a regular on NBC's THE BIG SHOW. From the commercial, it looks like he's using old routines he and John Cleese wrote for the MARTY FELDMAN show... Mickey Dolenz, former MONKEE and CIRCUS BOY, is directing in England now, and recently directed a Mike Palin-Terry Jones half-hour, probably a new RIPPING YARNS episode... And John Cleese is hosting a humorous travelogue that appears this month on PBS stations, NORWAY -- HOME OF GIANTS. The promo for it portends a lot of physical humor.

- Rona Blabbit

Comix World Checklist

ANDROMEDA No. 6 [$1.25 from 323 Queen Street, West Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V 2A9]. An Alan Dean Foster special with illustrations by Tom Nesbitt (cover and one story), Peter Hsu, Paul Rivoche, and Don Marshall.

ECCENTRICS [$2.25postpaid from Jabberwocky Graphics, 804 North Nursery #232, Irving, TX 75061]. The first complete anthology of New Wave Cartoonists, edited by Brad Foster with an introduction by Clay Geerdes and art by Bruning, Bryson, Cosgriff, Day, Erling, Foster, Hansen, Heath, Hembeck, Johnson, Krauss, Mahamet, McCollum, Milike, Petertil, Vincent, Vojtko, Weir, and Whitney. 44 pages on nice book paper.

ELECTRIC PETE COMIX No. 2 [$1.35 pp from Electric Pete Studios, P.O. Box 962, Newark, NJ 07101]. Art by Silvia, Carvalho, Dery, Formisano, Goodwin, Jackson ("Wholewheat Comix") and Tilton.

EL VIBORA. Art by Nazario, Patillon, Max, Bea, Rochette, Gallardo and Mediavilla, Marti, Rodolfo and Willem. Reprints of work by Spain, Griffith and Deitch. From Barcelona, Spain; for prices and info on Spanish comix, write Jaume Fargas, Box 275, Barcelona, Spain. The Spanish comix are larger than American undergrounds in size and they tend toward lots of violence and weird sex. Adults only.

THE FIRST KINGDOM No. 11 [$1.25 from Bud Plant, P.O. Box 1886-F, Grass Valley, CA 95945]. The continuation of Jack Katz's solo epic about a future civilization.

HOOHA COMICS AND STORIES [$1.75 from Tim Fuller, 1718 Highland Avenue, Portsmouth, OH 45662]. A magazine-sized funny animal comic with art and story by Tim Fuller and John Leasure. Nice artwork on book paper. Fuller also has a small-sized comic, RATZLAFF COMICS No. 2, and he's offering both HOOHA and RATZLAFFE for $2.00 as a special. Very nice if you're into funny animals and fantasy.

MAKOKI. Another book from Spain (see EL VIBORA for information), this is a nicely done book by an artist strongly influenced by Segar's POPEYE. The work in this one is by Gallardo, Mediavilla and Borrayo.

VICIOS MODERNOS (Modern Vices). From Spain, a nice work by Alberto Galix and Ceesepe. A surreal view of sex and violence in a rock and roll milieu. Adults only.

YOUNG LUST No. 1 [$1.25 from Last Gasp Comix, 2180 Bryant, San Francisco, CA 94110]. Originally published by Company and Sons in San Francisco, this book then went to the Print Mint. Now it has been brought back into print by Last Gasp Comix. A parody love comic by Griffith and Kinney.

ZAP No. 9 [Last Gasp, see above; $1.50]. Back in print from Last Gasp. Cover is by S. Clay Wilson with work by Crumb, Spain, Williams (the regular ZAP artists). ZAP, invented by Robert Crumb, was the first successful underground comic. Crumb and his

friends sold it on the street in the late sixties for a quarter. The original first edition now sells for $150-$200 (the edition printed on Charles Plymell's press in 1968).

© 1980, Clay Geerdes. COMIX WORLD is an information newsletter printed twice monthly by Clay Geerdes, Box 7081, Berkeley, CA 94707. TCR folks may get twelve for $2.50. COMIX WORLD publishes a series of mini-comics designed to showcase new artists, the latest one of which are FUNNY LAW and SWEET CHEEKS. There are 27 issues to date and those interested may order the entire set for $10.00. A sample single comic is 50¢ plus a stamp. Adults only. Note: you must be eighteen years old to order most of the above comix.

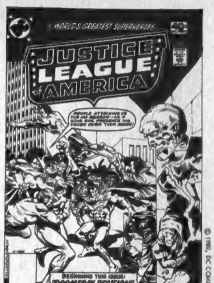
Review

This will probably be the saddest review I have to write for this column. In a way, it'll be the same as condemning a longtime friend -- a friend you'd like to be able to praise because you know he needs it desperately, but one which has done too much for you to be able to. I don't like to do it because there's a deep feeling of attachment to the book stemming from years of childhood enjoyment -- but I have to.

There is perhaps no other book in the DC line that is as important to me as JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA. I know that it is currently unfashionable to admit to liking comics because of super-heroes -- since super-heroes, apparently, may never qualify the medium to become the fine art many of us would have it aspire to be -- but I cannot be dishonest about it. Sure, I wish EVERY comic wasn't a super-hero book these days, and I would offer my years as editor of the Menomonee Falls GAZETTE as evidence of my attempt to make other formats and genres more popular -- but let's face it, I love super-characters. They're the reason I began collecting and I see no reason to deny it simply because I'm now 27 and not 12. And since I began collecting with an issue of JLA (#30), there is a definite link between the two of us.

Which is why I'm sorry to say that the book now being put out under the name is such a sad representation of the group. In fact, I'm even hard-pressed to single out a single nice thing to say about the book or its current creators, and that is an indication that prospects for the comic's imminent improvement are not great.

The problems, basically, are two-fold: the stories cease to be fun or interesting to read, and the art is no longer fun to look at. Worse than that, though, is the fact that the circulation is about as low as its ever been (if we are to believe the published sales figures). While recent weak-sellers such as BATMAN have put the skids to their sales plunge at around 135,000, JLA has dropped to 102,000 or thereabouts -- a point at which other books such as THE FLASH have been given major overhauls. I'm afraid a major shake-up here is definitely in order if the book's health is to be maintained -- but I can't see things changing.



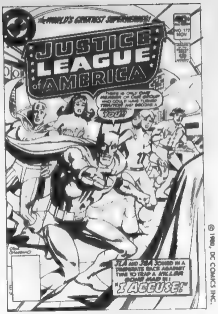
A new writer and a new art-team would do wonders for the book, but I doubt that it will happen. Unlike Marvel's revolving door policy of art and writing assignments, DC, and the JLA in particular, have been relative pillars of stability. Mike Sekowsky and Dick Dillin have been the book's only pencillers over the past twenty years. My admiration for this feat are unbounded, yet I yearn for a change. Dick Dillin and Frank McLaughlin can do fine work, and have on occasion -- but not on JLA. Dillin figures and composition sense are quite vertically oriented (his people seem to be about seven feet tall) -- Sekowsky, of course, with his wide-bodied, squat figures, was more horizontally oriented -- and Dillin often lays out his page by dividing the page in half on the horizontal, placing three vertical panels above and below that equater. Thus, when placing the large number of figures in the book in the appropriate frames, he must contrive some rather strange perspectives to fit them all in. Along with the crowded panels, Dillin opts for very narrow gutters between panels, providing very little rest for the eyes. McLaughlin, who in the Stan Drake/Dick Giordano style of inking, provides exactly the kind of thin-lined, delicate inking the book does NOT need, resulting in the kind of unfinished look you get when looking at anything inked by Vince Colletta. I'm not saying that Dillin and McLaughlin do not do fine work together -- you need only go back to the solo GREEN ARROW stories the pair did to see that they can turn out good work -- but I believe they'd be better suited handling a book with one character rather than JLA.

At the very least, I think we'd need a new inker. Unfortunately, I can think of no likely candidate among the regulars now working for DC, except Wally Wood, who has recently reappeared inking WONDER WOMAN -- but mixing Dillin and Wood could very well be disastrous. At best, I choose an entirely new penciller, as John Byrne, George Perez and John Buscema have shown at Marvel that a group book need not look like page after page of totem poles. Who then? Definitely not Joe Staton, whose work on the Justice Society and the Legion is evidence that his compositional abilities do not extend to group books, no matter how fast he may be. First choice and least likely I fear, is Jose Luis Garcia Lopez, who would quite properly do wonders for the book -- but with infrequent appearances as penciller the whole books would appear to mean that cannot handle a book of 25 pages on a regular basis. Don Newton would be another possibility, but he's assigned to two strips (BATMAN and SHAZAM) I wouldn't want him to be taken away from. And it isn't probable that Jim Aparo would be switched from THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD. So, it would seem that the probability of finding someone better suited to draw JLA than Dillin is small.

So, unfortunately, are the odds that Gerry Conway will get the head ho, despite the obvious need. It's

become painfully obvious that Conway is inadequate to the task of adding any more at all with his dialogue's reliance on gee-whizzy emotion rather than true revelation, and his insistance on one exclamation-per-word balloon, while his plotting consists of the predictible alternated with cheap attempts at excitement using devices such as deaths, guest-appearances and resignations. Worst of his crimes, however, are his almost total murder of the comradery that once existed in the book. Why are these people together? Do they like each other at all? Do they speak to each other about anything other than the latest world emergency or super-villain crisis they decide to take on? I don't mean, as Conway chose to do in a recent issue involving the Red Tornado, solo tales dressed up like JLA stories. I mean something akin to what Steve Englehart began in his short term on the book; a hint to the reasons these people meet as a club, what they do besides fight together, how they in-

teract in some sort of semblance of adult conversation. What we have now is the legacy of the many comics writers who believe Green Arrow, resident jerk, is a step toward realism in dialogue, or that having Wonder Woman, Black Canary and now Zatanna act as bitch-of-the-month is clever. That's not characterization, true characterization -- that's someone playing a record behind cardboard cut-outs. Unlike The Avengers, the Fantastic Four, the X-Men, et al., I got the idea from the early Gardner Fox issues, through dialogue which was far less blatant, but far more convincing, that the JLA was a group of normal, well-adjusted adults of average civility toward each other, who did not need to occupy themselves with the kind of stupid bickering that composes most of the casual conversation in today's group comics. (To see this kind of characterization applied to an even more sedate and well-adjusted



group -- the JSA -- in ALL-STAR and ADVENTURE, was too painful to bear.)

People often say that Batman does not belong in this book because he's a "lone avenger," or something; I'd say his characterization over the long haul would tend to make that argument look ridiculous as there are no heroes as willing to work with the police, Interpol, etc. THAN Batman. My opinion would be that Green Arrow, the group's resident Baretta-figure, would've been bounced out a long time ago if this book really was realistic and the JLA was a real club ("does not work or play well with others"). (Of course, recent BATMAN stories have shown even the intelligent Caped Crusader beating up poor losers and calling them "scum," so there is only so much you can rely on longtime characterization for.)

Green Arrow IS being ousted, but apparently not because of his cretinous personality but because he's being elected mayor of Star City. Although a strict reading of the by-laws as written by Mark Gruenwald in AMAZING WORLD OF DC #14 ("...the Justice League is prohibited from using their equipment or powers to acquire political power...") would tend to indicate that GA is in violation of a rule, it seems just as pointless a resignation as any. There seems to be a concerted effort to keep the membership severely limited (one of the "rules" included in that AWODC is one I find singularly needless: an attempt to liken the JLA to the Legion -- and recently, the Avengers -- in insisting that the United Nations has established a membership limit of ten to limit the group's power! These are not political people, they're out for justice -- why set a limit on how many people can be involved in saving the world?!? And they've already broken the ceiling since they have fourteen members) one policy I believe is not only contributory to boredom from seeing the same group of heroes every issue, but self-defeating in that it prevents other, newer titles from gaining from whatever readership this book has. Remember the old days? A hero like Atom or Hawkman would be added as soon as it became apparent that he would have some degree of longevity, just as the JSA, in its early years, added or subtracted members as they were introduced or discontinued. Three members were added in the first five years of the group's existence, bringing the total to ten; since 1964 there have been only six additions and two subtractions over a sixteen year period for a net gain of four. Considering the scores of characters introduced during this time, it doesn't seem too unreasonable to assume that membership may have kept a few of them around to the present. If, like me, a young reader begins with a flashy, hero-loaded title like JLA, he immediately seeks out the solo adventures of the membership. It took me a long time to warm up to titles like BLACKHAWK and THE DOOM PATROL because they weren't members; I wouldn't doubt that this becomes a weighty criterion for neophyte readers.

(And -- although I know the costume change was necessary -- can't have two heroines in the same group wearing fishnet stockings, can we -- I thought it was something of a gyp to ask the readers to elect Zatanna and then give her a whole new costume, when that's what we were electing, essentially -- especially such an unattractive one.)

It all boils down to the matter of what the JLA is supposed to be: a closed set like all other groups or one with ideals which by their nature preclude restrictive rules; a group so afraid of interference from the very people they are enlisted to protect that they headquarter in an invisible satellite miles above the Earth or one with such concern for those people that they solicit letters for help from those people (as they once did); a group of people banded together to grimly battle danger and crime as their only concern or one who genuinely enjoy each other's company and have banded together because they have more in common than the objective of American justice. I think it quite significant that Black Lightning rejected his offer of membership because he felt the JLA was too divorced from the very thing he was in costume for -- an indication that the group's priorities are a bit out of wack.

Len Wein has recently taken over guiding the book. Let us hope that he is able to do something to shake this book out of its current state of lethargy. If not, we may not have a JLA to kick around anymore. -- Mike Tiefenbacher

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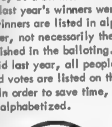
1979 ALLEY Awards

Well, the 1979 Alley Awards are now history. This year went a bit better, although I'm certain we can get a few more people to vote next year. The top number of votes possible in any one category this year was 222, although few categories were actually voted on by everyone. This year's average age was 22.6, and the average number of comics bought per month is 31.9.

This year we did experience something new: ballot stuffing. For whatever reason, we received seven ballots from Paul Eivsen of Flushing, NY with seven names and seven different forms of ballots, different writing, ink, etc. The only trouble was, they all came the same day, and they all had the same letterhead on the envelopes. I don't know why you did it, Paul, but next time, be a bit more subtle.

As last year's winners were, all award winners are listed in alphabetical order, not necessarily the order they finished in the balloting. Also as we did last year, all people who received votes are listed on the next page. In order to save time, they are not alphabetized.



THE 1979 ALLEY AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE FIELD OF COMIC ART

CATEGORY 1: NEWSSTAND COMIC BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

A1: EDITOR
- JULIUS SCHWARTZ for SUPERMAN
- ROGER STERN for X-MEN
- ROY THOMAS for CONAN THE BARBARIAN

A2: WRITER - Drama
- CHRIS CLAREMONT for X-MEN
- DAVID MICHELINIE for IRON MAN

A3: WRITER - Comedy
- FRED HEMBECK for HEMBECK
- BILL MANTLO for HOWARD THE DUCK
- LEN WEIN for PLASTIC MAN

A4: ARTIST - Drama
- JOHN BYRNE for X-MEN
- MICHAEL GOLDEN for THE MICRONAUTS

A5: ARTIST - Comedy
- GENE COLAN for HOWARD THE DUCK
- JOE STATON for PLASTIC MAN

A6: INKER - Drama or comedy
- TERRY AUSTIN for X-MEN
- BOB LAYTON for IRON MAN

A7: OTHER
- TOM ORZECHOWSKI for X-MEN [lettering]
- LEN WEIN for X-MEN [coloring]

CATEGORY 2: COMIC STRIPS APPEARING IN U.S. NEWSPAPERS

B1: WRITER - Drama
- RON GOULART for STAR HAWKS
- STAN LEE for THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

B2: Writer - Comedy
- CHARLES M. SCHULZ for PEANUTS
- GARRY B. TRUDEAU for DOONESBURY

B3: ARTIST - Drama
- GIL KANE for STAR HAWKS
- RUSS MANNING for STAR WARS
- JOHN ROMITA for THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

B4: ARTIST - Comedy
- DIK BROWNE for HAGAR THE HORRIBLE
- JEFF MacNELLY for SHOE
- GARRY TRUDEAU for DOONESBURY

CATEGORY 3: FAN PUBLICATIONS

C1: PUBLISHER [Overall content]
- GARY GROTH for THE COMICS JOURNAL
- ALAN LIGHT for THE BUYER'S GUIDE
- JAMES VAN HISE for THE ROCKET'S BLAST-COMICOLLECTOR

C2: WRITER
- JIM ENGEL/CHUCK FIALA for FANDOM CONFIDENTIAL
- RICHARD AND WENDY PINI for ELFQUEST
- CAT YRONWODE for "The Spirit Of The Spirit"

C3: ARTIST
- JIM ENGEL for DICK DUCK, DUCK DICK
- CHUCK FIALA for BULLET CROW
- FRED HEMBECK for DATELINE/WHAT'S UP DOC?
- WENDY PINI for ELFQUEST

CATEGORY 4: UNDERGROUND COMIX

D1: WRITER
- WILL EISNER for LIFE ON ANOTHER PLANET
- WENDY AND RICHARD PINI for ELFQUEST
- DAVE SIM for CEREBUS THE AARDVARK

D2: ARTIST
- WILL EISNER for LIFE ON ANOTHER PLANET
- WENDY PINI for ELFQUEST
- DAVE SIM for CEREBUS THE AARDVARK

HONORABLE MENTION CATEGORY

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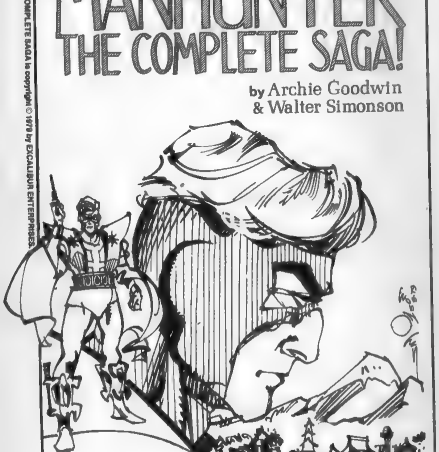

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[Continued from page 3)

but now he is married to Sheik Ali Bey's homely daughter Fwani, who wears the Jewel of Immortality on her forehead -- and this is only the sub-plot in a tale which basically revolves around the criminal Sand Saref's attempts to swindle the old sheik out of his oil lands." If possible, try to read that paragraph again and try to get some of the original intent. I'm very sorry, Cat. (And good luck with your new TBG column!)

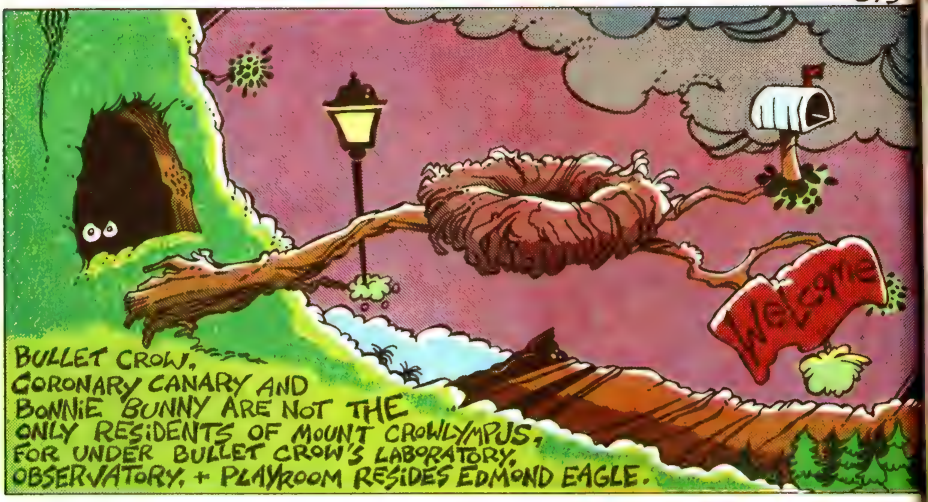
- Mike Tiefenbacher

BULLET CROW by CHUCK FIALA

★ ★ ★

FOWL OF FORTUNE

013



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FOR MANY YEARS THE MOUNTAIN WAS ALL HIS. MUCH OF THE SURROUNDING PROPERTY WAS ALSO HIS

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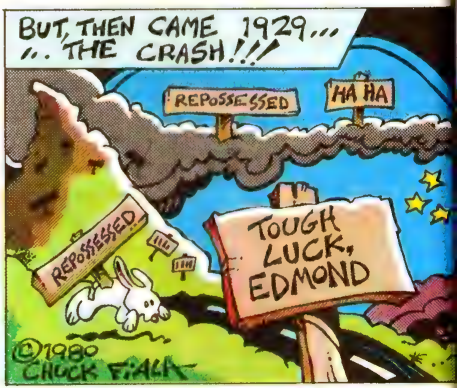
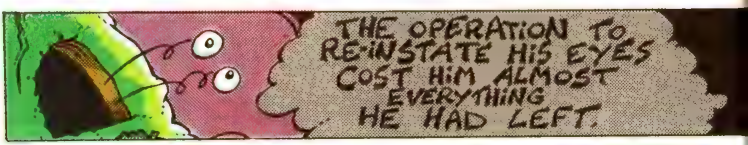


HE CRIED HIS EYES OUT.

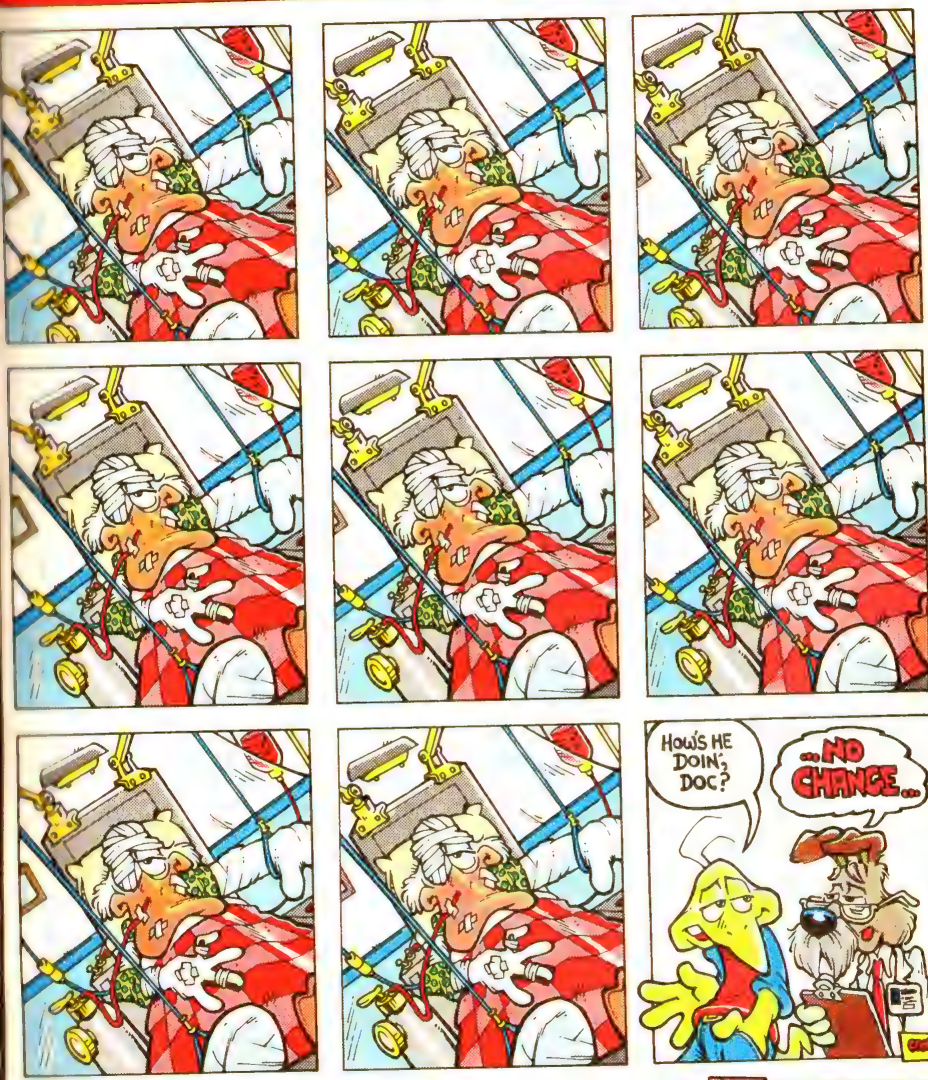


NOW HE SITS ALONE IN THE ONE PIECE OF PROPERTY LEFT TO HIS NAME... ... A HOLE ... IN THE SIDE OF MOUNT CROWLYMPUS! DIDN'T THE DOCTORS DO A NICE JOB?
TO BE CONT.

DICK DUCK, DUCK DICK

by Jim Engel

MEANWHILE, BACK AT MERCY SAKES ALIVE HOSPITAL...



pals no.13

Feature

I SWEAR I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS! I SWEAR IT!

A Look At Death In The Comics

By Beppe Sabatini

Have you noticed that you can hardly open a comic these days without seeing somebody drop dead? Rather morbid, isn't it, all these villains going to meet their final reward, all these oaths being sworn for revenge, all these heroes making the ultimate sacrifice? Well, what are we doing with all these gloomy comics in our hands anyway? Just what is the purpose of death in the comics?

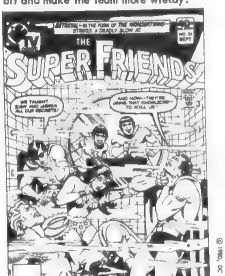
Certainly, one of the reasons that dying has become so popular recently is for the sake of credibility. Comics are, by their very nature, a fantastic medium with only the slightest relation to the real world. When we set about to read a comic, we do so with a willing suspension of disbelief; that is, we know from the start that we're reading fiction but we choose to put aside that knowledge for a few minutes and get all caught up in the story. Still, after you've read comics for a year or two, your willingness to believe may be pretty threadbare or stretched thin. After all, how many times can you watch Sgt. Rock run through a hail of machine gun bullets, unharmed, before you give the whole affair up as a lot of nonsense?

So every now and then, the writer (or editor) of a comic will decide to patch up our belief just a bit by having somebody actually die. In Sgt. Rock's comic, then, Ice Cream Soldier became the first major character to die in the Silver Age. Well, sort of. Because Robert Kanigher brought him back, but said that he didn't, maybe, and it seemed as if he couldn't quite make up his mind. And thereby established another long-standing comic death tradition: hedging. (For this and other references, check out the attached timeline.)

Well, then, he'd done it, let's say. And once Kanigher had killed off one of his major, popular characters there was always that tension -- an undercurrent, really, a realization that your hero was mortal (and, for that matter, so were you). Say! Maybe these stupid war comics were sort of realistic after all!

When you think about it, it's really only sort of natural that most of the early deaths in comics were war-related, since death is so much more a part of war than of normal life. (Normal life, in this context, meaning wearing funny costumes and punching super-criminals.) It also seems sort of **logical** that most of those early deaths were written by Stan Lee, who was, at that time at least, constantly trying to make comics more realistic and find new approaches that had never been tried before. A lot of what Marvel was doing back in the early sixties was a reaction to the complaints of long-time readers. Heroes, those fans would gripe, never got married, never quarreled, never had problems. And certainly, every dumb kid in the world used to complain that nobody in the comics ever died. So Stan took the new approach and did the unthinkable.

Once death had become more-or-less acceptable, writers started using it for a number of reasons besides just realism. One purpose to which we seem to see it put all the time is for the sake of convenience. When the X-Men or the Justice League get too crowded or unmanageable, scripters often feel they can whittle the line-up down a bit and make the team more wieldy.



(As well as gain a bit of realism to boot; none of these categories are mutally exclusive.) But what happened, way too often, was that the convenience got played up and the realism somehow seemed to get forgotten. Whoops! Thunderbird died. Oh well, we had too many members anyway. Uh-oh, Red Tornado got blown up! What? AGAIN?

The same sort of thing happens when a character outlives his usefulness. I-Ching was killed in an off-hand way by a sniper's bullet and a new editor when his role as teacher to a civilian Diana Prince no longer became necessary. When the Hulk's atomic-world love Jarella had been milked for enough heartbreak, she too was quickly disposed of (strangely enough, in exactly the same way as Gwen's father, Captain Stacy). And all of the deceased friends and relations, who's been so attached and devoted beforehand, never seemed to give the dead a second thought.

This is not to say that a death in a team can't do it any good; quite the contrary, a well-handled fatality can do wonders for a strip. Particularly a large team like the Legion or the Howling Commandos, which have so many members that Ferro Lad or Juni Juniper can be easily spared.

Another purpose for death in the comics, and to date one of those which has been the most successful, is to w the final end to a series. Manhunter Warlock and the Doom Patrol, along with a relative few others, have die when their feature did, and usually to the ultimate benefit of the strip. The Goodwin/Simonson Manhunter, for example, was blown up to keep later hands from messing up the char acter. As it turned out, this was a pretty good idea; when the Secret Society of Super-Villains was forme (In a fairly terrible comic), Manhun was there, but it was only a CLONE of the original character. It's some thing of a compromise, but it DOES preserve the integrity of the origina stories.

It's easy to see why companies will tamper with old masterpieces; really, it's almost forgiveable. Wh choosing between a new, possibly s cessful series and some back issues i an ivory tower, any good businessm will choose the first. But if you we lucky enough to see the original Neal Adams DEADMAN stories, do It drive you crazy to see the Hook brought back to life every few year

There's another good reason to use a death as the final end to a se That comic is going to have a defin resolution and a real finish to it, w can be very satisfying if you're tir of storylines that go on for years, a have those ends that never seem to fied up, and seem to go on forever sort of like this sentence. It has th realism factor going for it, too, an that realism will extend to the oth comics around it. Think of all the cancelled Marvel comics lately -- MS. MARVEL, HOWARD THE DU NOVA -- any one of the non-lice books could have ended with the d of the character. You KNOW it because you saw it happen with C and Bloodstone. Makes you nervo doesn't it?

Now, this death-by-cancella can be misused just as horribly as thing else; the last issue of COME KELLY is about the worst example gratuitous death you could imagin Somebody decided it would be a g good idea to kill off the Deadly D along with their comic, perhaps t overcompensate for the nearly inv nearable Howling Commandos. W with a dozen people to kill and a about twenty pages to do it in, It

like watching clay pidgeons in a shooting gallery. (As it was, they only showed about six of the deaths -- I dunno, maybe they lost count or something.)

Now, the final purpose, and probably the best, is for artistic or literary reasons. It is, after all, one of the writer's jobs to comment on the human condition, and that certainly ought to include death. And how it affects people and things around it, and so on as it is happening. It's not easy; writing about death -- in depth -- usually involves a bit more space than you can squeeze into a few word balloons. It would probably take an entire issue to deal with the subject with the comprehensiveness that it really deserves. The recent eulogy for Aunt May (THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #196) was a nice effort in this direction, although of course, the dear sweet lady came back to life. And the death of Jonah Hex last year was another example of writing ABOUT death, and not using it as a gimmick or a plot device.

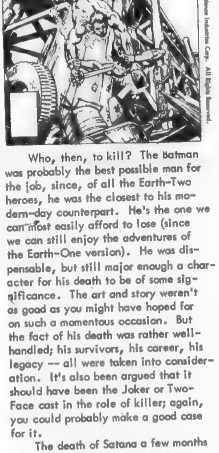
As we mentioned earlier, these four categories of death AREN'T mutually exclusive; they can and probably should overlap. The death of Ferro Lad, who perished blowing up the galaxy-devouring Sun-Eater, was realistic, practical, and well-written, too. The death of the Ancient One, who was killed by Shuma-Garath and went on to become one with the universe, was an excellent story and logical extension of the character's direction for the ten years previous (as Dr. Strange was "promoted" to Sorcerer Supreme; it also might be mentioned that the Ancient One's ascension to godhood was not the stroll-around-the-block occurrence that it seems to be today). So it is possible to write stories that use dying to good effect.

But, like too many of those gimmicks which Stan Lee used to create the illusion of reality, this one is suffering from extreme overexposure. If you look at the attached Death Timeline, you can see a capsule history of Death in the Comics. Throughout the sixties, publishers seemed content with one or two deaths a year, just enough to keep us readers aware that it was always a distinct, if distant, possibility. But when Gwen Stacy died, everybody just seemed to go berserk.

It might be that that issue sold phenomenally well -- we don't know. (It certainly is cleaning up in the collectors' arena, going for about nine dollars these days.) But after that apparently pivotal death, dying became all the rage in comics, with about half a dozen people passing on each year. In fact -- this is really an overgeneralization -- in fact, it seems to hit the hardest in the spring and the odd-numbered years (astrology, anyone?).

And this last year has been the hardest hit of all. In that time we've seen the death of at least ten important characters, and that is staggering as a mortality rate compared to previous years, a real wretched excess of death. Obviously, some of these folks are going to miraculously find their way back into the land of the living; still, as things stand now the situation is pretty grim. Let's examine these deaths one at a time, and take a look at the way in which they were handled.

The first death cover-dated this year was that of the Earth-Two Batman, an off-stage charter member of the Justice Society of America. The JSA has been in action, on-again off-again, for close to forty years now, and nobody's EVER gotten killed (except maybe Larry Lance, who wasn't really a member anyway.) So, you might make a good argument that the time has come.



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Who, then, to kill? The Batman was probably the best possible man for the job, since, of all the Earth-Two heroes, he was the closest to his modern-day counterpart. He's the one we can most easily afford to lose (since we can still enjoy the adventures of the Earth-One version). He was dispensable, but still major enough a character for his death to be of some significance. The art and story weren't as good as you might have hoped for on such a momentous occasion. But the fact of his death was rather well-handled; his survivors, his career, his legacy -- all were taken into consideration. It's also been argued that it should have been the Joker or Two-Face cast in the role of killer; again, you could probably make a good case for it.

The death of Satana a few months later was very much a death of convenience. Marvel has had that new character called Satanna on the back-burner for quite awhile now (she may or may not show up as a back-up feature in the new TOMB OF DRACULA magazine). It might have been that Marvel wanted to avoid confusion by having two characters around with the same name, and decided to get rid of the former, make-no-money version. Whatever the reason, it was a pretty unimaginitive story, in which Satana kicked off in an uncharacteristic Dr. Strange-style battle, for reasons that were never made too clear. This really shouldn't count as an end-of-series death since nothing from her old series was revived.

The death of Belit and her Black Corsairs had been planned for CONAN #100 for over a year, and it was only a bit of bad luck that landed it in with this crop. Adapted from the last part of Robert E. Howard's "Queen of the Black Coast," it told the story of how Belit died at the hands of Stygian demons and came back from beyond the grave to save Conan's life. The comic version was, if anything, even more meaningful than the original story, since the readers of the comic had known Belit (and her Black Corsairs) for almost four years, and would naturally be more affected by her death than a one-time short story reader. It was a moving story that combined the best of both Thomas and Howard; a sensitive handling of an important moment in Conan's life that continues to affect him in the newest issues of his color comic. As far as the dying angle went, it was pretty close to ideal.

(In case you're wondering what was going on in #99, the first part of the story, a brief explanation is in order. This prologue was an extremely loose adaptation of another Howard story, "People of the Black Coast," the cover story of the paperback BLACK CANAAN, R.E. Howard, Berkeley, 1978. It involved the non-Conan tale of a man and his fiancee who were menaced by Lovecraftian demon-crabs while shipwrecked on an island called, coincidentally, the Black Coast. By the time the crabs make it to Stygia they had somehow changed from something out of Lovecraft to something out of KAMANDI. This adaptation was so loose that it was very ill-fitting.)

That same month, in another bit of bad-timing, in another giant, was a death that was even better. This was TOMB OF DRACULA #70 and the death of Quincy Harker (and temporarily, of Dracula as well). This was the resolution to one of Marvel's most consistently excellent comics of the decade. For six years these two had fought it out, and in the end Quincy got him, though he had to die to do it. Frank and Jessica found each other and Domini was reunited with her son. Don't you wish every cancelled comic

could end so conclusively and satisfyingly?

I know what you're thinking: "But they ruined it! They brought Dracula back to life in that new black and white magazine! Without Palmer, and soon, without Wolfman!" Well, frankly, I'm just going to pretend it doesn't exist. Who wants to see such a perfect ending ruined?

Our next character's death was also "preordained," like Dracula and Belit, her demise was set months in advance and just fell in with all the others. This was Serina, Jane Seymour's role in BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. This adaptation would hardly be worth mentioning except that it is a perfect example of how NOT to kill somebody. Picture the original episode, after the thin plotline had exhausted itself and ground to a lurching halt. Then, and only then, in a move unrelated to anything else in the show, a Cylon jumped out from behind a rock and shot the poor girl. Surprise, you're dead! Huh? What? Where did that come from?

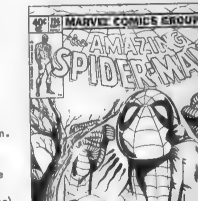
The obvious justification for this move would be that it often happens that way in real war, and, of course, it does; but the whole style and mood of the show up till then had been a free-wheeling fun-for-all. This bit of "tragic realism" shoehorned in quickly before a commercial break was a nerve-shattering example of changing stylistic horses in mid-stream.

The producers, it would seem, wanted to open up Apollo's possibilities as a romantic lead, and eliminate a character (Serina) who looked and sounded too much like another (Athena). We can only marvel at the dispassion involved. Imagine if the second and third episode had been aired together, as was originally planned. Poor Apollo would have gotten married, gotten a son, and a cute dog, and then been widowed -- all in one week! What stunningly shallow character development. [Ed. note: This arose because Jane Seymour had signed on only for the original six hours that were scripted and filmed before the order came down for a full season of hour episodes -- of which she was not signed and did not wish to be part of. Thus, the hasty tacked on ending to her character.]

But it goes without saying that Marvel wasn't responsible for the scripting, and couldn't have changed the month that issue came out. It was just an unfortunate coincidence that these three long-planned deaths came out at once. But wouldn't you think, that since Marvel knew that these three would all fall together -- since they had known it for months -- wouldn't you think that somebody somewhere would say: "Enough!"? That an editor-in-chief or a general consensus of writers would decide on a moratorium on death for the rest of the year?

Nope, sorry. Before these deaths could even sink in we got hit with the demises of Deathlok, Sharon Carter and the almost-death of Aunt May. Surely, it couldn't be THAT hard to provide for some sort of long-range over-all guidance.

Deathlok's end, in MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE, was a whole lot like the death of Satana; after all, both of them were in team-ups, both were characters in cancelled and long-forgotten series. Like the Satana story, this one didn't wrap up any loose ends; in fact, it raised more questions about Deathlok than it answered (Who had him rebuilt? Why? If it was Roxxon, how did they get the futuristic technology to do it? How did they find Deathlok? Where had he been? How could he co-exist with his younger present-day self? What happened to his humanity?). Apparently, it wasn't even very permanent, since TWO-IN-ONE's letter column recently hinted that the Deathlok of an alternate future might be coming back.



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The death of Sharon Carter in CAPTAIN AMERICA was one of many in a mass suicide by the National Force, a Nazi cult whose self-destruction was obviously modeled after the Guyana incident. Or it seemed to be, anyway. Actually, it's hard to make any sense out of this particular death; why a long forgotten and uninteresting supporting character should be brought back only to be immediately killed off is beyond me. Why the videotape method of showing her death? To leave some future writer the option of her revival, perhaps. Was this supposed to be an example of relevance, or dealings with current social issues? Hardly, since this merely mentioned the cult/suicide topic, and didn't go anywhere with it anyway. And though she wasn't much, Sharon was one of the only supporting characters left in the comic. All in all, a death that seemed completely senseless.

And, while we're on the subject of senselessness, we have to mention the temporary four-issue death of Aunt May, which began the same issue as the indefinite death of the Black Cat and the presumable permanent death of her father. AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #195, the triple-threat issue in question, was probably supposed to be a meaningful piece about old folks, and how our elderly should have the right to die at home, and other bits which could have made up a nice story. But the ending was so rushed and the deaths so closely stacked together at the end, that it almost seemed as if Marv Wolfman was shooting fish in a barrel.

Once we got to #196, though, it looked as if things were shaping up. An entire issue was devoted to Aunt May's funeral and eulogy, a very real instance of grief and human reaction being dealt with realistically and in some depth. It was about the only death in comics from natural causes and, consequently, one of the first that WASN'T immediately followed by the inevitable quest for revenge. The funeral scenes used a few too-obvious cliches -- "I never told her that I loved her while I had the chance"; "What a shame we never see each other except at such tragic occasions," and so on. But then again, people at funerals really do talk that way, or think that way at least, and for a comic it was an amazing display of original thought and sensitivity. (Future writers would be advised to avoid the trap of using similar dialogue -- it would be very realistic but repetitious and dull.) One can only wonder why the author chose to go to such lengths for such a character, Aunt May, whom we almost certainly knew WAS NOT REALLY DEAD. It makes a mockery of the whole story and in retrospect, it makes the whole issue a waste of space.

You probably didn't think of it that angle, either -- to the vast majority of Marvel's readership, something like ninety percent, Gwen Stacy and the Green Goblin did NOT die seven years ago; rather, they had just died some seven MONTHS earlier in the pages of MARVEL TALES. Don't forget, MARVEL TALES sells better than DAREDEVIL, DR. STRANGE (in fact, I believe) one of Marvel's Top Ten Sellers., and the average reader, this must seem like the most morbid comic around.

Long time readers, however, know that this really IS the most morbid comic around. Betty Brant's brother, Frederick "Patch" Foswell, Captain Gwen, Norman Osborn, Prof. Warren, John Jameson, the Black Cat and an innumerable host of super-villains

[Continued on page 50]

MODESTY BLAISE
by Peter O'Donnell & Enrique Romero

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
BLAISE WENT UP TEN MINUTES AGO—SHE WILL BE ALMOST AT THE TOP NOW
GOOD... AND THE POLICE WILL BE HERE VERY SOON
WE WILL FIND A SUITABLE PLACE TO WATCH FROM, MY DEAR... I WONDER WHERE OUR GOOD FRIEND HANS HAS GOT TO?
DR. BAUM? HE WENT UP AN HOUR BACK
WHAT? THE FOOL!
HE SAID THAT AS A CREATIVE ARTIST HE WISHED TO SEE THE KILLING HE HAD COMPOSED SO CAREFULLY
2709

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
BLAISE MATCHES FROM THE DISCARDED BALINESE RESTAURANT
NO SIGN OF GARVIN, BUT HE WILL BE HERE SOMEWHERE, WAITING FOR SELINA... AND BLAISE MUST SURELY ARRIVE SOON
AH! NOW IT BEGINS...
SOMEONE COMING OFF THE CHAIR-LIFT... MUST BE SELINA... LOOKS TALLER THAN I REMEMBER—BUMBY, IT'S NOT 'ER!
2710

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THIS CAPER... I CAN FEEL IT BUT I CAN'T FIGURE IT... WISH TO GOD I COULD REMEMBER WHAT I KNOW...
PRINCESS..!
AS MODESTY WILLIE, THE REFLEXES DR. BAUM HAS CONDITIONED INTO HER TAKE OVER INSTANTLY—
GARVIN! ENEMY! GET HIM BEFORE HE KILLS ME!
NO—WAIT!
2711

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THE ECHOES OF THE SHOT FADE...
WILLIE...!
AS BAUM HAS PLANNED, THE ACT OF SHOOTING WILLIE GARVIN UNLOCKS ALL DOORS OF MODESTY'S MEMORY—AND IN A TERRIFYING EXPLOSION OF AWARENESS SHE KNOWS WHO SHE IS... AND WHAT SHE HAS DONE
WILLIE! NO!
BEAUTIFUL... I PULL THE STRINGS OF THE MIND, AND THE PUPPET OBEYS
2712

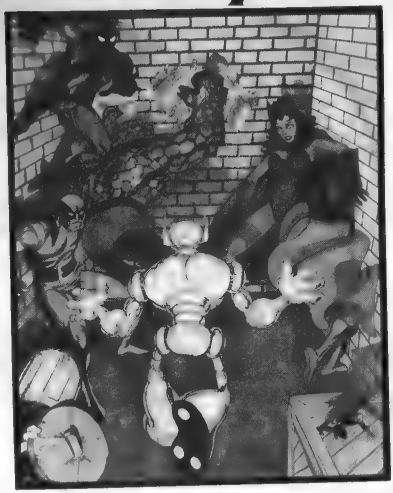
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MODESTY KNEELS IN A DAZE OF SHOCK AND HORROR
OH GOD, WILLIE... THEY DID SOMETHING TO ME... PUT SOME SORT OF KINK IN MY MIND SO TO KILL YOU ON SIGHT...
MAHMOUD... BAUM... SELINA AND THE OTHERS — I REMEMBER NOW
I'LL PUT THEM DOWN, WILLIE... EVERY ONE OF THEM
BAUM EMERGES GUILTILY FROM HIDING AND PICKS UP MODESTY'S FALLEN GUN
TO MAKE YOU KILL GARVIN WAS AS IF I MADE YOU CUT OFF YOUR OWN ARM... WON'T YOU CONGRATULATE ME, DEAR CHILD?
27

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
SUDDENLY WILLIE GARVIN SPEAKS IN A SLURRED VOICE...
YOU'RE... SLIPPING PRINCESS... YOU ONLY... CREASED ME
WILLIE! OH WILLIE LOVE...
HE LIVES? BUT YOU COULD NOT MISS! YOU WERE CONDITIONED TO KILL! YOU MUST HAVE CHANGED YOUR AIM IN THE LAST INSTANT!
BUT WHY? AH... HE SPOKE BEFORE YOU SAW HIM. HE CALLED YOU PRINCESS... A SPECIAL WORD, PERHAPS... ENOUGH TO DIVERT YOUR AIM EVEN AS YOU FIRED
INFURIATING

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
NEAR THE FOOT OF THE CHAIR-LIFT
AH... THE POLICE HAVE ARRIVED
... LET US HOPE THAT FOOL BAUM KEEPS OUT OF THEIR WAY — HE SHOULD HAVE RESISTED THE TEMPTATION TO SHOOT MODESTY BLAISE KILL GARVIN. IT IS AN UNIMPORTANT MOMENT
AFTERMATH IS WHAT MATTERS. THE UNBINDING MENTAL TORMENT...
MAHMOUD — SOMETHING IS WRONG!

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THOSE PEOPLE WHO JUST WENT UP ON THE CHAIR-LIFT — THEY WERE NOT THE POLICE
THEY MUST BE — I PHONED THE TIP-OFF MYSELF
NO, I SAW AND HEARD THEM — ONE WAS VINEZZI OF INTERPOL, AND WITH HIM WAS AN ENGLISH LORD AND A GIRL...
A BLONDE, WITH LEGS TO MAKE A MAN'S BONES ACHE — AHHH
GARVIN'S GIRL — SHE'S FOLLOWED HERE AND BROUGHT IN THE HEAVIES!

thank you!



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SUPERMAN by Siegel & Shuster

BUT-BUT MAYBE I WON'T SEE HIM FOR A LONG TIME--MAYBE NOT FOR YEARS! WE'RE NOT SUCH VERY GOOD FRIENDS...
BESIDES--I'M A REPORTER; I HAVE TO GET TO MY PAPER. I CAN'T TAKE YOU.
DON'T GIVE US THAT. WE KNOW YOU CAN LEAD US TO SUPERMAN!
--BUT I HAVE SOME IMPORTANT INTERVIEWS TO HANDLE--YOU CAN'T COME WITH ME!
LISTEN TO THE NUT, MA--HE'S TALKIN' TO HIMSELF!
HOW CAN I SHOW UP AT THE DAILY PLANET WITH THESE TWO INVISIBLE OGRES TAGGING ALONG? THEY'RE CERTAIN TO GET ME IN TROUBLE AGAIN WITH LOIS.--
HELLO, BEAUTIFUL!
(--OH--OH--I'M IN TROUBLE ALREADY!--)
HOI MAN--THAT MAN INSULTED ME!
I HOID HIM, BABE!
APOLOGIZE, YOU!--OR I GIVE YA THIS!
HOW GENEROUS!
OMY!
FER A FRESH GUY, HE SOTAINLY HAS A HARD JAW!
HOMAN--SOMETIMES YOU REMIND ME OF SUPERMAN!
(--LUCKY HE DIDN'T HIT ME HARD--OR HE'D HAVE BROKEN HIS HAND FOR GOOD!--)
I KNOW YOU INVISIBLE OGRES WOULD GET ME IN TROUBLE! IF YOU MUST TAG ALONG, WHY CAN'T YOU KEEP YOUR MOUTHS SHUT?
HOW'D WE KNOW HE'D HIT YOU?
WE'RE VERY NAIVE!
SAY--WHAT'S EVERYONE RUNNING FOR?
BEHIND YOU, CLARK! WATCH OUT!
TAKE COVER! BRAKES WON'T HOLD!!
DANGER
EXPLOSIVES
(--HUNDREDS OF LIVES IN DANGER! BUT IF I CHANGE IN FRONT OF THESE INVISIBLE OGRES THE SECRET OF SUPERMAN'S IDENTITY WILL BE LOST!--)
OH BOY, OH BOY!
(--LET IT BE LOST, THEN! I'VE GOT TO STOP THAT TRUCK! SUPERMAN'S SECRET ISN'T WORTH ONE HUMAN LIFE!--)

The Menomonee Falls Gazette

BRAKES WON'T HOLD! TAKE COVER, EVERYONE, OR YOU'LL BE BLOWN TO BITS!
DANGER!
(—NOW THOSE INVISIBLE OGIES KNOW I'M REALLY CLARK KENT, BUT THERE WASN'T ANY CHOICE,—)
IT'S SUPERMAN! SHE'S STOPPING! JUST AS EASY AS PIE!
COPYRIGHT 1941, MCCLURE NEWSPAPER SYNDICATE
(—EASY, EH? IT WON'T BE FOR ME, NOW THAT THOSE INVISIBLE PIXIES KNOW THAT SUPERMAN IS CLARK KENT—)
COPYRIGHT 1941, MCCLURE NEWSPAPER SYNDICATE
THANKS, SUPERMAN, FOR SAVING MY LIFE!
DON'T MENTION IT—THERE WERE OTHER LIVES ENDANGERED, TOO!
SO WE FINALLY FOUND YOU, SUPERMAN!
YES—I SUPPOSE YOU INVISIBLE OGIES FEEL WONDERFUL, NOW THAT YOU KNOW MY SECRET.
SECRET? WHAT SECRET?
AND SAY—WHAT HAPPENED TO CLARK KENT?
HUH? BUT YOU WERE RIGHT THERE WHEN HE CHANGED HIS...
BUT WHAT DID YOU SAY HE CHANGED?
CHANGED? OH—OH, YES—HE CHANGED HIS PLACE OF SHELTER. THAT'S HOW YOU LOST HIM, I GUESS!
WE GUESS SO...
WE WERE SO EXCITED WE LEFT KENT IN THAT DOORWAY AND HOPPED ON THAT RUNAWAY TRUCK.
EVER SINCE YOU STOPPED THAT RUNAWAY TRUCK, YOU'VE BEEN SITTING HERE IN CLARK'S HOUSE NOT DOING A THING.
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE STILL WAITING FOR KENT TO COME!
NO—I'M NOT WAITING FOR KENT TO COME, I'M WAITING FOR YOU INVISIBLE OGIES TO LEAVE!
BUT WE WON'T LEAVE! WE LIKE TO GO ZIPPING AROUND WITH YOU!
THEN YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME! BECAUSE I'VE DECIDED NOT TO STIR FROM HERE UNTIL YOU'RE SO BORED TO DEATH YOU'LL BE GLAD TO GO AWAY. EVEN IF IT MEANS SITTING HERE A WHOLE YEAR!
SUPERMAN—WE WON'T LET YOU DO THIS TO US!
WE'LL MAKE YOU ZIP, YOU'LL SEE!
COPYRIGHT 1941, MCCLURE NEWSPAPER SYNDICATE
IF I CHOOSE TO SIT HERE UNTIL YOU'RE BORED ENOUGH TO LEAVE ME, THERE'S NOTHING YOU INVISIBLE OGIES CAN DO ABOUT IT!
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK!
B-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z
SSH! CAREFUL! HE'S GOT SUPER-HEARING!
B-Z-Z-ZZZ-B-Z-Z-ZZZ
SAY—WHAT ARE YOU TWO COOKING UP NOW?
WONDERFUL! PERFECT!
HA-HA! YOU STICK WITH HIM, OGY. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
BOY—ARE WE GOING TO HAVE YOU ZIP, SUPERMAN!

...ers for the help ... a wide variety of shops that ... comprising the Top 100 ... are printing a di... ... which we hope ... better. The following ... the appropriate form for ... shops have and will par... the survey but have not been ... because they did not appear in ... months' listings, and hence ... necessary form.

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THE SEEKERS
by John Burns and Les Lilley

THE SEEKERS
JACOB IS HURRYING BACK TO ROCHTON HOUSE AND HAS LEFT SUSANNE TO DEAL WITH CHRISSIE AND HER FATHER...
IF YOU WON'T PROMISE TO BEHAVE YOURSELVES I'LL HAVE TO LASH YOU TOGETHER
GO TO HELL!
TURN AROUND
RUN FOR IT, DAD!

THE SEEKERS
CHRISSIE HAS BUTTED SUSANNE IN THE STOMACH AND IS MAKING A RUN FOR IT...
STOP, CHRISSIE! YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T GET AWAY!
TRY TO STOP ME!

THE SEEKERS
ALTHOUGH HER ARMS ARE BOUND, CHRISSIE PASTELO IS MAKING A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE FROM SUSANNE...
...AND THE GIRL ONCE AGAIN MAKES A DASH FOR FREEDOM...
OKAY CHRISSIE... THAT'S IT! NO MORE FUSSY-FOOTING AROUND, THIS TIME YOU'RE FOR IT!

THE SEEKERS
WITH HER HEAD STILL RINGING FROM CHRISSIE'S KICK, SUSANNE SPRINTS ALONG THE WATER'S EDGE AFTER THE FLEEING GIRL...

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns &
L. A. J. Lilley
THERE'S NOT MUCH FIGHT LEFT IN YOU NOW
WHY DID YOU EVEN TRY TO ESCAPE? YOU DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE
I WASN'T WORRIED ABOUT MYSELF, BUT WITH ANY LUCK MY FATHER WILL HAVE GOT AWAY WHILE YOU WERE CHASING ME
CRIPES! I'D FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT HIM!

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns &
L. A. J. Lilley
JACOB WILL SLAUGHTER ME IF I'VE LET PASTELO GET AWAY!
THANK HEAVENS! HE'S STILL HERE
DAD! WHY DIDN'T YOU RUN FOR IT WHEN I GAVE YOU THE CHANCE?
IT WAS USELESS, CHRISSIE. THE KNOW WHAT I'V BEEN DOING... IT IS BETTER TO FACE RUIN LIKE A MAN

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns &
L. A. J. Lilley
IF I RAN AWAY NOW, CHRISSIE, I WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO WORK AS AN ARTIST AGAIN...
...I COULD MAYBE CHANGE MY NAME AND MAYBE CHANGE MY APPEARANCE, BUT MY PAINTINGS WOULD ALWAYS BE INSTANTLY RECOGNISABLE
I UNDERSTAND, FATHER
YOU'VE BEEN AN OLD FOOL, PASTELO. COME ON IT'S TIME WE MADE OUR WAY BACK TO ROCHTON HOUSE THAT YOU CAN FACE THE MUSIC

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns &
L. A. J. Lilley
HURRY UP, YOU TWO, JACOB WILL BE WONDERING WHAT'S HAPPENED TO US
YOU'LL HAVE TO SLOW DOWN A BIT, MY FATHER IS TOO OLD FOR THIS SORT OF THING
LOOK OUT! HE'S GOING OVER!
PULL, CHRISSIE!
I CAN'T! I'M SLIPPI AS WELL

Pocket Checklist

April 1980

- ☐ ARCHIE #266
- ☐ BARNEY AND DONALD #44
- ☐ DONALD DUCK #220
- ☐ LOONEY TUNES #32
- ☐ MICKEY MOUSE #206
- ☐ TOM AND JERRY #329
- ☐ UNCLE SCROOGE #177
- ☐ WALT DISNEY'S COMICS AND STORIES #477
- ☐ WINNIE-THE-POOH #19
- ☐ YOGEMITE SAM #66

- ☐ HEAVY METAL #38
- ☐ NATIONAL LAMPOON #120 [V2#122]

- ☐ CAPTAIN CANUCK #9

- ☐ CREEPY #118
- ☐ FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND #164
- ☐ 1984 #13
- ☐ VAMPIRELLA #87

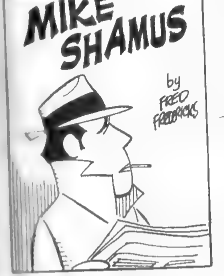
- ☐ ACTION COMICS #509
- ☐ ADVENTURE COMICS #473
- ☐ ALL-OUT WAR #6
- ☐ BATMAN #325
- ☐ THE BEST OF DC #6 [Daily Planet]
- ☐ THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #164
- ☐ DC COMICS PRESENTS #23
- ☐ DC SPECIAL BLUE-RIBBON DIGEST #3 [USA]
- ☐ DETECTIVE COMICS #492
- ☐ THE FLASH #287
- ☐ GHOSTS #90
- ☐ GREEN LANTERN #130
- ☐ HOUSE OF MYSTERY #282
- ☐ JONAH HEX #38
- ☐ JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #180
- ☐ THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #265
- ☐ THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY #7
- ☐ SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE #26
- ☐ SGT. ROCK #342
- ☐ SUPER FRIENDS #34
- ☐ SUPERMAN #349
- ☐ THE SUPERMAN FAMILY #202
- ☐ THE UNEXPECTED #200
- ☐ UNKNOWN SOLDIER #241
- ☐ THE UNTOLD LEGEND OF THE BATMAN #1
- ☐ WARLORD #35
- ☐ WEIRD WAR TALES #89
- ☐ WEIRD WESTERN TALES #69
- ☐ WONDER WOMAN #269

- ☐ AMAZING ADVENTURES #8
- ☐ THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #206
- ☐ THE AVENGERS #197
- ☐ BATTLESTAR GALACTICA #17
- ☐ CAPTAIN AMERICA #247
- ☐ CONAN THE BARBARIAN #112

- ☐ CRAZY #63
- ☐ DAREDEVIL #165
- ☐ THE DAZZLER #1
- ☐ THE DEFENDERS #85
- ☐ FANTASTIC FOUR #220
- ☐ FANTASY MASTERPIECES #8
- ☐ FUN AND GAMES MAGAZINE #11
- ☐ GHOST RIDER #46
- ☐ THE HULK! #21
- ☐ THE INCREDIBLE HULK #249
- ☐ IRON MAN #136
- ☐ MAN-THING #5
- ☐ MARVEL'S GREATEST COMICS #90
- ☐ MARVEL SPOTLIGHT #7 [Star-Lord]
- ☐ MARVEL SUPER ACTION #21
- ☐ MARVEL SUPER-HEROES #89
- ☐ MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL #16
- ☐ MARVEL TALES #112
- ☐ MARVEL TEAM-UP #95
- ☐ MARVEL TREASURY EDITION #26 [Hulk!]
- ☐ MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #65
- ☐ MASTER OF KUNG FU #90
- ☐ THE MICRONAUTS #19
- ☐ ROM #8
- ☐ THE SAVAGE SHE-HULK #6
- ☐ THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #53
- ☐ SHOGUN WARRIORS #18
- ☐ THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #44
- ☐ SPIDER-WOMAN #28
- ☐ SPIDEY SUPER STORIES #47
- ☐ STAR TREK #4
- ☐ STAR WARS #37
- ☐ TALES TO ASTONISH #8
- ☐ THOR #297
- ☐ THE TOMB OF DRACULA #5
- ☐ X-MEN #133

TCR Mailboat

FRED FREDERICKS, Eastham, MA: How you get all those advance covers, I'll never know, but THE COMIC READER looks great and my son and I look forward to it each month... If you're interested, I do have an item for your COMIC STRIP CIRCUS: Starting in the May, 1980 issue of



MIKE SHAYNE MYSTERY MAGAZINE I'll be writing and drawing a new comic strip called MIKE SHAMUS... the last if the hard boiled private eyes... played for laughs. Mike's world is that of the late late show plus all the beloved cliches of detective fiction... unlike MANDRAKE THE MAGICIAN (which I'll still be drawing)-MIKE SHAMUS will be drawn in a "cartoon" style and each gag will be complete. I hope the fans take a look!

Also -- to add to the tracking down of who's doing what in Gold Key -- make that Whitman, I've been writing WITCH HAZEL AND THE LITTLE SCARECROW BOY in LITTLE LULU since 1971!

Fanzine Reviews

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK No. 13 [$1.25 from Aardvark-Vanaheim Press, 221 Queen St. S. #1401, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 1W5]. "Black Magiking" is concerned with Cerebus's unfortunate beaching in Lower Felda where he is taken for a sorcerer and faces sacrifice to Necross, a "sixteen foot paperweight," as described by the aardvark. Dave Sim contributes another hilarious story.

ELFQUEST No. 6 [$1.25 from WaRP Graphics, 2 Reno Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603]. In "The Quest Begins," Cutter and Leetah have two children (elves do things fast) named Suntop and Ember, and when three bedraggled humans show up, Cutter and Skywise go off in search of the fate of the human race. Another fine issue.

THE HARVEY COLLECTORS' NEWSLETTER No. 4 [$1.00 from Bart Bush, 114 E. Main Street, Norman, OK 73069]. The first serious attempt to gather the fans of all the various and varied Harvey series in one place, this magazine focuses this time on the Harvey heroes (including one of Jim Steranko's original promo pieces for a character they didn't buy), with a checklist of Harvey titles (working) by Dan Stevenson and other discussion columns. Certainly unique subject matter, and obviously of specialized interest.

HEMBECK 1980 [$2.50 from Fantaco Enterprises, 21 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12210]. Fred's newest collection is half new this time, with some of the best of his BUYER'S GUIDE stuff backed by

20 pages of new material. Fred is his humorous, inciteful self, and we recommend it heartily.

STRIP SCENE No. 11 [$1.50 from Remuda Publishing, 6312 Crowchild Trail S.W., Calgary, Alberta, CANADA T3E 5R5]. Strip fans and collectors must get this -- it's chock full of articles about everything the textbooks miss! Recommended!

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STAR HAWKS
by Ron Goulart & Gil Kane

CHAVEZ AND REX ARRIVE ON THE HUB, A SATELLITE CITY ORBITING THE PLANET ESMERALDA.
THERE'S NOTHING MORE INTELLECTUALLY STIMULATING THAN A COLLEGE TOWN.
CURB YOUR OGLING, CHAVEZ
WE HAVE TO CONTACT OUR STAR HAWK INVESTIGATING TEAM
LET'S HOPE BY NOW THEY HAVE SOME LEAD ON WHO KIDNAPPED DOC AJAX!
WELCOME ABOARD, SIR!
WELL, IT'S KASS!
I'M AGENT 1ST CLASS KASS NOW, SIR! I WAS PROMOTED AFTER OUR MISSION TO SELVA.
AND I HAVE A CLUE TO THE WHEREABOUTS OF DOC!
© 1978 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

NOBODY SAW DOC AJAX LEAVE THE HUB... NOBODY HEARD ANYTHING UNUSUAL, SIR.
BUT YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING, KASS?
WHEN WE TRI TO CHECK HI PINPHONE LOG, WE WER TOLD IT HAD BEEN DESTROYE
SOUNDS LIK SOMEBODY WANTED TO WIPE OUT ALL RECORD OF DOC'S CALLS.
I PERSUADED THE CENTRAL COMPUTER TO RETRIEVE THE LOG FROM THE DISPOZER IN TIME!
YEP, YOU ALWAYS HAD A WAY WITH MACHINES.
I WAS TOO LATE TO SAVE ALL THE LOG, SIR...
BUT WE GOT A FRAGMENT OF A VERY ODD CONVERSATION!
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The Menomonee Falls Gazette

EMPIRE 77 IS MOSTLY ICE AND SNOW AND COLD..
...IT IS WHERE DOC AJAX AWAKENS...
SUFFERIN' SUNS! THAT WAS SOME NAP!
...HAVE THE FEELING I SLEPT A LONG TIME!
ALL I CAN REMEMBER IS...
LEAPIN' LUNA!
AH, DOC AJAX... I'M PLEASED YOU'VE RECOVERED.
NOW LET ME EXPLAIN WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO FOR ME.
© 1978 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

YOU'RE ILKA KANDELL... A FUGITIVE FROM THE LAW!
AND THIS PLACE IS...
XANDU NORTH, YES. BUILT BY MY LATE HUSBAND.
HE'S LATE, AS I RECALL, BECAUSE YOU AND YOUR LOVER, RAKER, MURDERED HIM.
SO YOU STAIR HAWKS CLAIM.
BUT LET ME TELL YOU THE REASON FOR YOUR VISIT...
I WANT YOU TO ASSIST US IN...
DOC AJAX DOESN'T WORK FOR THE LIKES OF YOU, MADAM!
ONCE I'VE EXPLAINED THINGS FULLY, DOCTOR...
...I'M SURE YOU'LL BE EAGER TO COOPERATE.
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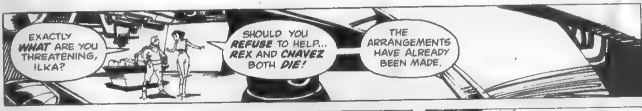
STAR HAWKS
by Ron Goulart & Gil Kane

WHEN MY HUSBAND DIED, KAMADU NORTH WAS LEFT UNFINISHED.. AND ABANDONED!
I FIND IT MAKES A PERFECT HIDEOUT...
...ESPECIALLY AFTER I HAD IT PUT IN WORKING ORDER!
I WAS A FRIEND OF YOUR HUSBAND'S. YOU AND RAKER KILLED HIM AND...
IT'S RAKER I WANT TO DISCUSS WITH YOU, DOCTOR!
© 1978 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.
THERE'S NOTHING LEFT OF HIM, MADAM, EXCEPT HIS BRAIN... AND THAT'S BEEN STOLEN.
I KNOW.. I'M THE ONE WHO STOLE IT...
...AND THIS IS WHY I BROUGHT YOU HERE!
JUMPIN' JUPITER!
GALLOPIN' GALAXIES!
WHAT IN BLUE BLAZES IS THAT, MADAM?
WHY, IT'S RAKER'S BODY, DOCTOR.
© 1979 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.
IMPOSSIBLE! HIS BODY WAS DESTROYED WEEKS AGO.
THIS IS A SIMULACRA ...A SYNTHETIC BODY WE'VE CREATED.
YOU'LL IMPLANT HIS REAL BRAIN IN IT.
NOT FLAPPING LIKELY! I WON'T AID YOU AT ALL!
WE'RE NOT DEBATING, DOC AJAX..
I'M MERELY TELLING YOU WHAT YOU'LL BE DOING.

The Menomonee Falls Gazette

LEAPIN' LUNA!
I HATE TO ADMIT IT, MADAM, BUT THIS SYNBODY IS WELL CONSTRUCTED.
KANE GOUDA
1-2
I STILL HAVE ACCESS TO A BLACK OPS DEAL IN MONEY, HONEY!
AND YOU'LL FIND A VERY CAPABLE STAFF HERE.
YOU'VE SPENT A BLINKING FORTUNE ...TAKEN INCREDIBLE RISKS.
I DON'T QUITE UNDERSTAND WHY.
MY MOTIVE IS A VERY SIMPLE ONE.
I LOVE HIM.
VERY WELL, MADAM, YOU WERE ABLE TO ABDUCT ME...
...AND CONVEY ME TO THIS SNOWBOUND RATHOLE.
BUT I WILL NOT HELP YOU BRING THAT RASCAL RAKER BACK TO LIFE!
YOU'RE WRONG THERE, DOCTOR.
NEITHER TORTURE NOR DRUGS CAN MAKE ME PERFORM--
OH, I DON'T INTEND TO DO ANYTHING TO YOU.
KANE GOUDA
1-3
HOWEVER, I'VE ARRANGED THINGS SO THAT IF YOU DON'T GO ALONG WITH US...
...TWO OF YOUR VERY CLOSEST FRIENDS WILL DIE!

STAR HAWKS
by Ron Goulart & Gil Kane


EXACTLY WHAT ARE YOU THREATENING, ILKA?
SHOULD YOU REFUSE TO HELP... REX AND CHAVEZ BOTH DIE!
THE ARRANGEMENTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE.

THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO CHAT ABOUT A CERTAIN BRAIN YOU'RE INTERESTED IN...
THIS IS A CHAP WE'D BETTER CHAT WITH!
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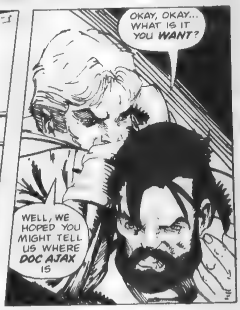
The Menomonee Falls Gazette



THEN YOU DID HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE KIDNAPPING?
YES, YES, I HELPED THEM... I REALLY HAD NO CHOICE.
OKAY, SO WHERE'S DOC?
I CAN'T TELL YOU WHERE HE IS NOW... ONLY WHERE I DELIVERED HIM. TWO DAYS AGO.

DON'T SCREECH, BOSSLADY, YOU'LL BLOW OUT MY EARVENTS.
CAN'T SEE WHY YOU NEED THIS STUMBLE-BUM, ANYWAY... WHEN YOU GOT ME!
1979 United Feature Syndicate, Inc

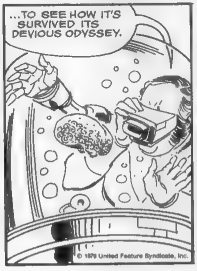
STAR HAWKS
by Ron Goulart & Gil Kane

AT XANADU NORTH, PREPARATIONS FOR IMPLANTING RAKER'S BRAIN IN HIS NEW BODY BEGIN...
LET'S STEP LIVELY, YOU STOOGES!
GO EASY WITH THOSE LUXRODS, DUMMOX!
© 1979 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.
THIS THINKTANK FELLA IS ONE VERY REPULSIVE ROBOT, ILKA...
...REMINDS ME OF A DOG I CREATED IN ONE OF MY MORE WHIMSICAL MOMENTS.
I NEEDN'T TELL YOU, DOC AJAX, HOW IMPORTANT RAKER'S REINCARNATION IS TO ME!
I'LL DO MY BEST, BUT I CAN'T GUARANTEE THAT...
SHOULD ANYTHING GO WRONG, YOU'LL DIE...
...AND SO WILL REX AND CHAVEZ!
I-8

LOOKS LIKE OUR CRACKPOT OPERATION IS ABOUT READY TO COMMENCE, ILKA.
LET ME WARN YOU NOT TO TRY TO SABOTAGE THE IMPLANT, DOCTOR!
AS YOU MUST KNOW, I HAVE AGENTS ABOARD THE HOOSEGOW...
ONE OF THEM HAD ACCESS TO REX AND CHAVEZ' SKYCAR.
I-9
"HE PLANTED A VIAL OF PLUTONIUM DUST IN THE AIRCIRC SYSTEM."
© 1979 United Feature Syndicate, Inc
...IF I WISH, I CAN ACTIVATE IT FROM HERE!
"CAUSING BOTH OF YOUR FRIENDS TO DIE HORRIBLY."

The Menomonee Falls Gazette

OKAY, HERE'S RAKER'S BRAIN...LET'S SEE THE ILLUSTRIOUS DOC AJAX DO HIS STUFF!
I'VE WAITED A LONG TIME TO HAVE RAKER ALIVE AGAIN...
NOTHING MUST GO WRONG!



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THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH THE BRAIN.
MADAM, IT'S OBVIOUS THERE'S A SLIGHT LESION IN THE FRONTAL CORTEX!
WE CAN'T CHANCE USING IT.
KANE COMICS
1-11

YOU'RE TALKING THROUGH YOUR BEANIE, DOC!
OUR NEUROPROBES ALREADY CHECKED IT OUT!
GALLOPIN' GALAXIES! I DON'T NEED GADGETS TO TELL ME THIS BRAIN'S IN WRETCHED SHAPE!
IF I PLANT THE THING IN RAKER'S DOME HE MAY WAKE UP A MADMAN OR WORSE!
NO RISK IS TOO GREAT IF I CAN HAVE RAKER BACK AGAIN!
BY ALL THE RULES OF BIOETHICS, I CAN'T RISK...
YOU WILL PROCEED, DOCTOR!

STAR HAWKS
by Ron Goulart & Gil Kane

REX AND CHAVEZ DEPART THE HUB...
HOY! HERE IT IS MY BIRTHDAY... AND ONCE AGAIN I'M FAR FROM MY LOVED ONES!
C'MON, CHAVEZ... LET'S CONCENTRATE ON FINDING DOC AJAX.
PRETTY NIFTY THE WAY PROF EMERZON ABDUCTED DOC!
YEP. FIRST HE LURED HIM INTO HIS OFFICE AT THE ROBOTICS COLLEGE AND USED A STUNGUN ON HIM.
THEN HE SNEAKED DOC OFF THE HUB DISGUISED AS ONE OF HIS DANG ROBOTS.
EMERZON SAYS HE DELIVERED DOC TO A WAY STATION AT THE EDGE OF EMPIRE 77.
© 1979 United Feature Syndicate, Inc
ZAM! EMPIRE 77 IS NOTHING BUT ICE, SNOW AND MORE ICE!
KANE
1-12
ON THE PLANET ESMERALDA CHAVEZ AND REX ARE ZOOMING NORTHWARD...
ZANG! FEEL LIKE WE'RE FLYING THROUGH A GIANT'S ICEBOX!
NEVERTHELESS, CHAVEZ... THIS IS THE WAY THEY TOOK DOC AJAX.
KANE
1-13
IMAGINE ILKA KANDELL MASTERMINDING THE GRAB...
GOT A HUNCH THIS HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH RAKER'S MISSING BRAIN.
WE HAVEN'T SEEN HER SINCE WAY LAST YEAR WHEN SHE TRIED TO MURDER US ALL!
YEAH, ILKA WAS ENAMORED OF THAT LOUT, WASN'T SHE?
AND MAYBE SHE THINKS DOC CAN BRING HIM BACK TO LIFE.
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NOW! THERE'S THE TRAPPER'S SHACK WE'RE LOOKING FOR, REX.
YEAH, THAT'S WHERE DOC AJAX WAS DROPPED OFF TWO DAYS AGO
WE'LL LAND BEYOND IT AND HIKE BACK, CHAVEZ
SHAME NOBODY'S BUILT A SHOPPING MALL HEREABOUTS
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AND SEVERAL HUNDRED MILES TO THE NORTH...
KANE
1-14
WE OUGHT TO HALT...
...THERE'S CLEAR EVIDENCE RAKER'S BRAIN IS DAMAGED!
ENOUGH GAB, DOC! LET'S GET ROLLING!
I'VE WAITED LONG MONTHS TO BE REUNITED WITH HIM...
I WANT HIM REVIVED NOW!

SNOWCAT AFTER SNOWCAT... IT'S DOWNRIGHT DULL.
WASN'T IT LIVELY HERE A FEW DAYS BACK, LARZ?
DIDN'T WE HOLD THE RENOWNED DOC AJAX UNTIL MRS. KENDALL PICKED HIM UP?
AND DIDN'T SHE PAY US A TIDY SUM FOR SO DOING?
YES, BUT USUALLY NOTHING EVER HAP--
KAWHAM!
GREETINGS, FELLAS!
THOUGHT WE'D DROP IN FOR A CHAT.

STAR HAWKS
by Ron Goulart & Gil Kane

BRR! WISH YOU CHAPS HADN'T BLASTED THE DOOR CLEAN OFF ITS...
WE'RE STAR HAWK AGENTS-
AND WE KNOW YOU HAD DOC AJAX HERE!
© 1979 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.
WHERE IS HE NOW?
DOC AJAX... DOC AJAX... DON'T RECALL THE NAME...
HOY GENTS! IF WE DON'T GET A CONVERSATION GOING SOON...
I'LL TOSS YOU OUT IN THE COLD TO STIMULATE YOUR MEMORIES!
KANE comics
1-16
NO NEED OF THAT, PILGRIM... WE'LL TALK!
YES, WE'LL ABSOLUTELY BABBLE!
AT XANADU NORTH, DOC AJAX RELUCTANTLY BEGINS IMPLANTING PROCEDURES...
PLOPPING A DAMAGED BRAIN INTO THIS SVNBODY IS ASKING FOR TROUBLE!
BUTTON YOUR LIP, DOC... AND GET THOSE GIFTED FINGERS TO WORK!
© 1979 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.
I'M WELL AWARE OF THE DANGERS, DOCTOR...
...BUT WE WON'T TURN BACK!
EVEN WITH AN UNDAMAGED BRAIN, RAKER WAS A VICIOUS SCOUNDREL...
...WHAT'LL HE BE LIKE NOW?
KANE comics
1-17

The Menomonee Falls Gazette

AT THE XANADU LAB, DOC AJAX WORKS TO IMPLANT RAKER'S BRAIN IN THE GYNBODY...
KANE
1-10
THE HOURS DRIFT BY...
AND FINALLY...
THERE. WE'RE FINISHED.
WAS THE OPERATION A SUCCESS?
THAT, MADAM, DEPENDS ENTIRELY ON YOUR POINT OF VIEW.
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TECHNICALLY, ILKA, ALL WENT WELL, BUT...
OH, I DON'T CARE ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE, DOC!
I HAVE MY BELOVED AGAIN...
...AFTER ALL THESE LONELY MONTHS!
LOOK! HIS EYELIDS ARE FLICKERING!
HE'S ALIVE! RAKER IS ALIVE!
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WHO DID THIS TERRIBLE THING TO ME?
WHO MADE ME LIVE AGAIN?
KANE
1-19

STAR HAWKS
by Ron Goulart & Gil Kane

I WAS AT PEACE!
I DIDN'T WANT LIFE!
BUT, DARLING...
KANE GOULART
1-30
LEAPIN' LUNA!
HE'S NUTTY AS A SOYLOAF!
RAKER, YOU MUST KNOW ME! I'M ILKA! I LOVE YOU AND I GAVE YOU-
I LOVE NO ONE!
I WANT ONLY DEATH!
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THIS XANADU NORTH WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SOME KIND OF FANCY RESORT, WASN'T IT, REX?
YEAH, KANDELL INTENDED IT TO BE A RETREAT FOR HIS INTELLECTUAL CRONIES.
EXCEPT DEAR ILKA BUMPED HIM OFF BEFORE THE JOINT GOT FINISHED.
APPARENTLY ENOUGH OF IT WAS BUILT TO SERVE AS A HIDEOUT FOR HER
GALLOPIN' GALAXIES! RAKER'S GOING BERSERK!
EXACTLY AS I PREDICTED!
KANE GOULART
1-21
WAP!
WHAT'S THE IDEA SMACKING THE BOSSLADY?
OUT OF MY WAY, POLT!
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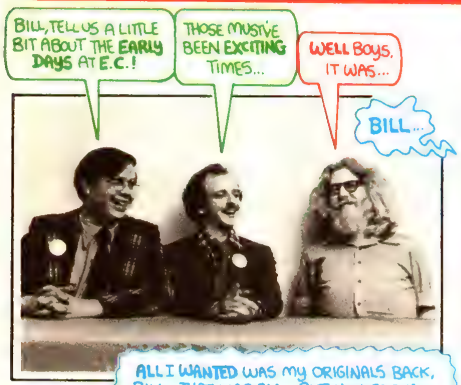
The Menomonee Falls Gazette

I DON'T UNDERSTAND - WHY DOES HE WANT TO DIE?
I REACHED YOU THE BRAIN WAS INJURED, ILKA!
RAKER'S AWAKENED COMPLETELY GOOFY!
KANE
1-23
© 1979 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.
KARASH
RAKER, PLEASE WAIT!

RANDOM CONFIDENTIAL

with Jim Engel & Charlie Plaia

BILL GAINES INTERVIEW



WHO THE HECK IS THAT?!?
GRAHAM INGELS!! BUT YOU'RE DEAD! I KILLED YOU MYSELF! THEN I CUT YOU UP, AND SERVED YOU AT A GOURMET DINNER!
I'm BACK, BILLLL...

ALL I WANTED WAS MY ORIGINALS BACK, BILL... THAT WAS ALL... BUT YOU SAID NO... YOU KILLED ME, BILL... YOU KILLED ME...
WE'RE SURE YOU TWO HAVE A LOT TO TALK ABOUT...
NO, GRAHAM! I MEAN, UH, "GHASTLY"! OLD PAL! YOU FORGET OUR AGREEMENT! I GOT THE ORIGINALS, AND YOU GOT THE FIFTH OF OLD GRAND DAD!
SO WE'LL JUST... UH...

NO, "GHASTLY"! NO!! "AAGGHH" IT WAS ALL COCHRAN'S IDEA! "ACK"! PLEASE...
COCHRAN'S DEAD, BILL... LIKE YOU, HE BEGGED... BUT HE'S DEAD... HE HAD SUCH PRETTY... SHOE-BUTTON EYES... GOODBYE, BILL...

GAINES AND INGLES PORTRAYED BY TCR EDITORIAL STAFF.

TCR Top 100 Comic Books

This mo.	Last mo.	Title, number Publisher, format, special features, price if more than 40¢	No. sold
1	--	KING CONAN No. 1 Marvel-Robert E. Howard, 48 pages; 75¢	15628
2	2	X-MEN No. 131 Marvel	10799
3	1	THE SAVAGE SHE-HULK No. 2 Marvel	8508
4	47*	MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL No. 15 Marvel-Paramount; color magazine; Star Trek; $1.50	8351
5	4	THE AVENGERS No. 193 Marvel	8126
6	--	STAR WARS ANNUAL No. 1 Marvel; 48 pages; 75¢	7695
7	5	THE MICRONAUTS No. 15 Marvel-Mego	7549
8	6	THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 202 Marvel	7519
9	7	FANTASTIC FOUR No. 216 Marvel	7366
10	8	ROM No. 4 Marvel-Parker Bros.	6688
11	9	CONAN THE BARBARIAN No. 108 Marvel-Robert E. Howard	6570
12	12	IRON MAN No. 132 Marvel	6075
13	10	STAR WARS No. 33 Marvel-20th Century-Fox	6035
14	13	THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN No. 40 Marvel	5758
15	14	MARVEL TEAM-UP No. 91 Marvel; Spider-Man and Ghost Rider	5709
16	12*	MAN-THING No. 3 Marvel	5484
17	16	MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE No. 61 Marvel; The Thing and Starhawk	4946
18	30	FANTASY MASTERPIECES No. 4 Marvel; Silver Surfer reprints; 48 pages; 75¢	4877
19	15	THOR No. 293 Marvel	4875
20	5*	HOWARD THE DUCK No. 3 Marvel; black and white magazine; $1.50	4871
21	19	THE INCREDIBLE HULK No. 245 Marvel	4680
22	26	BATTLESTAR GALACTICA No. 13 Marvel-Universal	4659
23	27*	DAREDEVIL No. 163 Marvel	4496
24	21	THE DEFENDERS No. 81 Marvel	4457
25	20	THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN No. 49 Marvel; black and white magazine; $1.25	4394
26	24	SPIDER-WOMAN No. 24 Marvel	4385
27	29	CAPTAIN AMERICA No. 243 Marvel	4210
28	25*	MARVEL SPOTLIGHT No. 5 Marvel; Dragon Lord	4085
29	--	SUPERBOY SPECTACULAR No. 1 DC; 64 pages; $1.00	4084
30	25	WARLORD No. 31 DC	3967
31	27	SHOGUN WARRIORS No. 14 Marvel-Mattel	3913
32	18	THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY No. 3 DC	3693
33	28	THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES No. 261 DC	3571
34	33	MASTER OF KUNG FU No. 86 Marvel	3404
35	45	AMAZING ADVENTURES No. 4 Marvel; X-Men reprints	3223
36	36	GHOST RIDER No. 42 Marvel	3028
37	32*	MARVEL PREVIEW No. 20 Marvel; black and white magazine; Bizarre Adventures; reprints	2963
38	37	GREEN LANTERN No. 126 DC	2853
39	35	JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA No. 176 DC	2840
40	39	SUPERMAN No. 345 DC	2656
41	38	DC COMICS PRESENTS No. 19 DC	2651
42	43	BATMAN No. 321 DC	2495
43	44	ADVENTURE COMICS No. 469 DC	2489
44	42	ACTION COMICS No. 505 DC	2460
45	45*	THE TOMB OF DRACULA No. 3 Marvel; black and white magazine	2405
46	40	THE FLASH No. 283 DC	2400
47	41	THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD No. 160 DC	2377
48	49*	THE SUPERMAN FAMILY No. 200 DC; 64 pages; $1.00	2317
49	47	TALES TO ASTONISH No. 4 Marvel; Sub-Mariner reprints	2298
50	46*	THE HULK No. 19 Marvel; color magazine; $1.50	2212
51	48	HEAVY METAL No. 34 [V3#9] HM Communications; color magazine; $2.00	2181
52	--	SUPER STAR HOLIDAY SPECIAL [DC SPECIAL SERIES No. 21] DC; 64 pages; $1.00	2018
53	50	WONDER WOMAN No. 265 DC	1702
54	54	MARVEL SUPER ACTION No. 17 Marvel; Avengers reprints	1466
55	53	MARVEL TALES No. 113 Marvel; Spider-Man reprints	1463
56	52	JONAH HEX No. 34 DC	1344
57	--	DC SPECIAL BLUE-RIBBON DIGEST No. 1 DC; digest, 96 pages; 95¢	1288
58	55	MARVEL'S GREATEST COMICS No. 86 Marvel; Fantastic Four reprints	1269
59	57*	MARVEL SUPER-HEROES No. 87 Marvel; Hulk reprints	1153
60	58	WEIRD WESTERN TALES No. 65 DC	982
61	57	SUPER FRIENDS No. 30 DC	774
62	65	FUN AND GAMES MAGAZINE No. 7 Marvel; 50¢	733
63	70*	SPIDEY SUPER STORIES No. 45 Marvel; 50¢	729
64	60*	ALL-OUT WAR No. 4 DC; 64 pages; $1.00	725
65	65*	THE BEST OF DC No. 4 DC; digest, 96 pages; 95¢; Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer	722
66	62	WEIRD WAR TALES No. 85 DC	687
67	67	MEN OF WAR No. 26 DC	663
68	64	SGT. ROCK No. 338 DC	621
69	71	HOUSE OF MYSTERY No. 278 DC	602
70	76*	THE UNEXPECTED No. 196 DC	563
71	70	UNKNOWN SOLDIER No. 237 DC	542
72	69	SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE No. 22 DC	514
73	75	GHOSTS No. 86 DC	506
74	59	UNCLE SCROOGE No. 173 Gold Key-Walt Disney; reprints	460
75	66	WALT DISNEY'S COMICS AND STORIES No. 473 Gold Key-Walt Disney; half reprints	369
76	74	DONALD DUCK No. 216 Gold Key-Walt Disney; reprints	266
77	72*	BUCK ROGERS No. 6 Gold Key-John Dille	237
78	81*	BATTLE OF THE PLANETS No. 5 Gold Key-Sandy Frank	212
79	76	CRAZY No. 59 Marvel; black and white magazine; $1.25	154
80	77	THE BEAGLE BOYS VS. UNCLE SCROOGE No. 12 Gold Key-Walt Disney; last issue	150
81	80*	HUEY, DEWEY AND LOUIE No. 61 Gold Key-Walt Disney	127
82	81	MICKEY MOUSE No. 204 Gold Key-Walt Disney; reprint	114
83	81*	BORIS KARLOFF TALES OF MYSTERY No. 97 Gold Key-Estate of Boris Karloff; last issue	111
84	--	RICHIE RICH BEST OF THE YEARS No. 5 Harvey; digest; 75¢	110
85	--	RICHIE RICH BANK BOOKS No. 45 Harvey	104
86	--	RICHIE RICH DIGEST WINNERS No. 5 Harvey	104
87	--	RICHIE RICH MILLIONS No. 99 Harvey	104
88	99	RICHIE RICH No. 188 Harvey	102
89	--	RICHIE RICH FORTUNES No. 50 Harvey	101
90	--	RICHIE RICH INVENTIONS No. 12 Harvey	101
91	--	RICHIE RICH JACKPOTS No. 45 Harvey	98
92	--	RICHIE RICH AND DOLLAR THE DOG No. 12 Harvey	95
93	83*	RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT! No. 94 Gold Key-Robert Ripley	94
94	--	RICHIE RICH ZILLIONZ No. 20 Harvey	94
95	86	CASPER'S TV SHOWTIME No. 2 Harvey	93
96	92	UFO AND OUTER SPACE No. 25 Gold Key	92
97	--	CASPER THE FRIENDLY GHOST No. 209 Harvey	91
98	--	SAD SACK No. 273 Harvey	88
99	--	HOT STUFF No. 153 Harvey	79
100	71	POPEYE THE SAILOR No. 155 Gold Key-King Features	75

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[Continued from page 20]

all died, often more than once. The comic is left with almost no supporting characters. Death has just become a bad habit in AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, a much-too-often used device that no longer conjures up even a glimmer of the "illusion of Reality."

Worse, it's a bad habit that seems to be catching. When ex-Spider-Man artist Ross Andru went over to edit at DC, he took a few bad habits with him. Consider the way that the Flash has been handled lately -- extended subplots, old dull villains returning, women problems, and now death -- what does that sound like? Of course! What we're seeing here is very much like the Flash done "Marvel style," a quickly-hardening formula that includes that occasional death for the sake of gut-wrenching realism.

This is an awful direction for The Flash to take. For years now his appeal has been in his normalcy; he's a middle-class, well-adjusted super-hero, the only survivor from an earlier era of comics who hasn't gone through a radical change. While all the Marvels and all the other Schwartz comics were trying so hard to be different, the Flash became truly unique because he was the only average one left. And, for at least five years, it's been a dependably pleasant comic.

In a way, the Peter Parker lifestyle has become the new norm, but it would be awful to rob Flash of his charmingly old fashioned appeal in a misguided attempt to update him. Wouldn't it be truly different -- and refreshing -- to see a happily-married Establishment super-hero with a healthy normal kid who never got kidnapped? (And a future appearance in an old LEGION story of descendants of Barry Allen means he does eventually have children.)

It's not going to happen, though; at least not in FLASH. Even as these words are being typed, the final issue of the nine-part Catch-the-Murderer "epic" has wheezed to a halt, and Iris is no less dead for all of it. At first, it seemed certain that it was a strange dream, with Iris dressed up like Batgirl and Flash high on angel dust and all sorts of unclear bizarre plot twists going on. But The Flash never did wake up, his wife remained dead, and surprisingly, no one seems to be complaining about it. It could just be that nobody's read the last several issues -- the art has been so thoroughly awful that they're almost impossible to understand, which adds to that surreal, nightmarish feeling. Still, she's gone now (for good, according to current editor Len Wein); the Allen's planned child will never be born, and Iris's death will add to the series not a fraction as much as her presence would have.

Now, a lot of fans out there do not care a bean's worth about the next character; in fact, many of you actively hate her. But the death of Batwoman is a perfect example of a kind of killing you could call "Trivia Death." It's easy to see how these things evolve -- the story calls for someone to be killed. So, to heighten the effect, the author selects an established character. But, to avoid any complaints, he chooses an old and forgotten one.

The trouble is, after a few of these Trivia Deaths they begin to seem horribly similar and contrived. Batwoman, Stuff, Wing, Bryndon Smith and Miss America were all killed within seconds of being reintroduced. Newer fans will not know or care who these poor victims are, nor will they know or care what's going on after awhile. Older readers will more than likely be outraged that a bit of history has been neatly erased. Either way, it won't have the desired effect; that is, the wish for the reader to share the hero's obsession with revenge. What a shame to bring back characters only to kill them off a few panels later!

Which, as a matter of fact, is just exactly what happened to Mr. Terrific in JUSTICE LEAGUE the very next month. Another character you might not have cared too much for -- he was the one who wore "Fair Play" on his stomach -- he appeared in the ALL-STAR JSA adventures of the '40s only once and had no super powers. He was rarely used in the Silver Age series except in cameos because, after all, a powerless fifty-year old man is of little use in a group that includes the Spectre and Superman. Gerry Conway probably took all of this into consideration when he decided that nobody would mind if Mr. Terrific got bumped off.

But let's take a look at the other side of the argument. First of all, and most obviously, the death of the Earth-Two Batman had taken place just a FEW MONTHS earlier, MUCH too brief an interval in a group that had gone forty years casualty-free.

And, as mentioned earlier, while the Earth-Two Batman was more-or-less expendable, the one and only Mr. Terrific certainly was not. We've lost the option to use him in revivals, team-ups, or whatever, and a bit of the Golden Age is gone forever. Of course, somebody could just create an Earth-One version, but that would be sort of a cop-out.

Plus, as characters go, he really was NOT such a loser. It is nice to have at least one character who believes so strongly in his ideals that he wears them on his stomach. His credo, "Fair Play," is a very basic part of what makes the super-hero tick and it's good to see it spelled out "up front" once in awhile.

Was he really such a minor member of the original JSA? Most of today's readership undoubtedly don't remember him at all. But those of who DO have seen him exclusively in his JLA/JSA team-ups in which he was a unique and integral member of the team. In other words, why kill off an unknown who would ONLY be remembered by those least likely to want to see him go?

Another good "con" argument -- death has become much too common in

DEATH BE NOT LOUD

How much emphasis is there on death in the comics today? These story titles, from three recent issues of the COMIC READER (March-May/79), may give some indication:

The Tanker Who Couldn't Die
The Snow Killers
The Graveyard Ace
Death Rises at Dawn
Death River
The Widow Maker
Time Keeps On Killing
Death Ransom
Death Out of a Bottle
The Disco of Death
Blood on the Grooves
Dead Heat
Death on the Hudson
The Dark Wings of Death
Kill or Be Killed
Casino Fatale
Till Death Do Us Part
***
Marked For Murder
A Death In The Family
To Stalk the Killer Skies
Death on the Black Coast
When a City Dies
...But This One Will Kill You!
Slaughter on Tenth Avenue
Requiem For a Deadman
Death Race for Cholera Bend
Good Health -- It's Killing Me
A Killer Cold and Clammy
The Mind That Could Murder
Death Has a Golden Grab
A Model Murder
The League of Super-Assassins
***
Fatal Finale
Case of the Cavorting Corpse
The SST Murders
Dead Soldiers Don't Disappear
A Code For Killers
The Murderous Moles
A Promise to the Dying
Over Your Own Dead Body
Death Orbit
The Menace of the Murder Machines
Weep, the Widow
The Long, Grey Line...of Death
If I Kill You, I Die
Death Dive
To Sleep...This Side of Death

the JLA/JSA team-ups. Larry Lance, the Spectre, Wing, the Red Tornado, the Earth-X Plastic Man and Blackhawks, and, on three separate occasions, the entire JSA have all been killed during these annual mob scenes, with varying degrees of permanence. It's almost become the rule and not the exception. (One is almost tempted to hope the team-ups stop before anyone else gets killed.)

Finally, an argument that scripter Conway couldn't have foreseen -- the fact that he would write an awful story. Terrific's death was wasted, virtually thrown away, on a dull who-dun-it full of transparent clues and obvious plot devices. Based on an unlikely premise that one of the heroes was a murderer, it ended with a last-minute "moral" lamely shoehorned in to try to justify the pointlessness of it all. As often happens, Conway felt the story could stand on the strength of its historical importance and didn't bother to exploit its vast potential. Terry Sloane did, indeed, die in vain.

Well, all of this has pretty well covered the comic book deaths of 1979. Some may be revived, some already have been. But by examining only the PERMANENT deaths in the comics, we're seeing only a tiny fraction of the influence of dying and death. Death saturates the comics in a constant stream of false deaths, near deaths, brushes with death and death traps. How many times have you seen a hero depicted as "dead" on a cover or a splash page? By this time it's second nature to assume that some sort of chicanery is going on. When a real death does occur it takes months before a skeptical readership is willing to accept it.

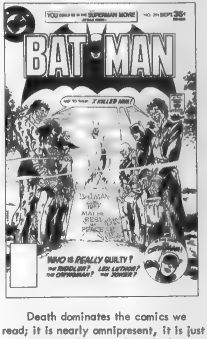
Then, too, let's not forget about the false death used as a form of punishment. The Comics Code has a provision, which makes a lot of sense when you think about it, that the villain shall always pay for his crimes and in no instance shall evil go unpunished. But the instances in which the villain goes to jail are rare, and constant jail breaks became really dull after awhile. So it happens almost inevitably that the criminal pays "the ultimate penalty," that is, he dies for his crimes. It would be difficult to think of a Marvel super-villain that hasn't "died" at one time or another, and the overwhelming majority of them have never let it prevent them from coming right back. Now what kind of punishment is that? Obviously, no punishment at all.

And, by examining permanent deaths as we've done, by necessity we leave out the astonishing number of people who actually manage to come back to life, a concept almost sacrilegious in its implications. Is resurrection really so commonplace? You'd think not, but still some folks like Red Tornado have managed to die and come back to life as many as three times. Steve Trevor has managed a similar trick, and is about to come back for the third time. The Spectre (who himself has died and come back a couple of times) once received permission from a surrogate Jehovah to revive an entire dead JSA. And Green Lantern's ring -- though helpless against the color yellow -- apparently does have the power to make the dead live, though he wisely declines to use it (witness his stubborn refusal to bring The Flash's dead wife back to life). I'm not a very religious person at all, and this whole idea doesn't offend me as much as it may sound. But it must be offending someone out there, and ALL of us would certainly like some limits placed on our nearly omnipotent super-heroes. No, what's really annoying is the absurdity of seeing somebody come back to life three times, as if the land of the dead had a revolving door.

What's more, in the case of a character who has been particularly well-handled, it can be extremely offensive to see a tasteless attempt at a revival. The clone of Gwen Stacy springs immediately to mind, but poor Ferro Lad has had an even rougher time of it. After the excellent story in which he died, he came back as a ghost, a twin brother, AND a clone! Obviously, neither of these characters were real people, but that kind of disrespect is still very irritating. A comic publisher would NEVER print a story about Bill Everett or Mort Weisinger coming back to life. (In fact, DC stopped publication on a story about Bill Finger doing just that, thank goodness.) It takes just a fraction of that judgement to refrain from revitalizing dead characters.

Certainly, poor sequels or misguided revivals weaken the impact of a well-done death story (or any kind of story, for that matter). Lyla Lerrol appeared in only one excellent SUPERMAN story, but her appearances as androids, in dreams, flashbacks and retrospectives have almost overwhelmed the original story.

The slew of deaths in the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN series shows what can happen when a somewhat directionless character goes on for years with the writer unable to decide what to do with them. Consider WONDER WOMAN, for example; the only two Earthly characters the comic has ever had, I Ching and Steve Trevor, have both been killed off. Shanna the She-Devil lost her entire supporting cast, most of them in one lot, rather pointlessly as well, since her series was the next thing to die. And the poor Sub-Mariner has lost his emperor, his mother, his father, his naval commander, his friend Toro, his fiance, his cousin, his old girlfriend, and most of his subjects in Atlantis. The poor guy has nobody left to talk to! Surely the way to revive a flagging series is NOT to inject some death into it.



Death dominates the comics we read; it is nearly omnipresent, it is just about inseparable. Look at the listing of recent story titles and get some ideas of the extent it's made its presence known. The Comics Code has a rule that forbids the use of the words "horror" or "terror" in comic book names or story titles. [A rule which seems to have been constructed solely to use against EC comics' top horror titles. MT] Imagine the chaos into which the industry would be thrown if they were to similarly ban the words "Death" and "Kill."

The use of death is the easiest way to generate tension in story -- the battle to the death, the close brush with death, -- and is the most commonly overused. Similarly, the use of revenge for a loved one or friend is one of the most powerful and easily-generated emotions. What is the immediate and overwhelming

reaction to every comic fatality? Well, of course, it is the teeth-gritting, fist-clenching, graveside oath for the seemingly all-important revenge. Certainly, it's not the place of the comics to teach the child how to cope with life, but the average media-reared kid (not only comics are guilty of this death-avenging excess) learns that the reaction to death is the desire for REVENGE. He is going to have an extremely hard time understanding his feelings of grief when he really does encounter death; after all, how often in real life is there somebody to blame? Similarly, the older reader is going to have an extemely difficult time believing that an obsession with revenge is good writing, or that the characters he's reading about have any realism at all. Even the death of Gwen Stacy, one of the most far-reaching and well-developed deaths, had only a few panels dealing with mourning, coping, a feeling of helplessness or anything else that would surely come about in real life. It would take an entire issue to do an entire funeral scene or eulogy with the depth it deserved. Aunt May's recent false alarm was a pretty good example of how the real thing should be handled. (Of course, too many funeral issues would get really tiresome too.)

Think of all the origins of all the super-heroes you know. How many of them do NOT involve a death? Very few, more than likely. (See the adjoining chart.) Super-heroes are conceived in death, they live with death peering over their shoulder, and, more than most of us would like it, they die.

And what is this likely to lead to? Well, certainly, don't misunderstand me. There isn't the slightest chance in the world that some too-impressionable youngster is going to start injecting his playmates with Joker serum. It seems unlikely that even television could affect people's behavior so drastically, and without a doubt, the power of drawings on paper is much less. No, overkill in the comics won't harden our hearts to death in the real world. Rather, it will desensitize us to -- death in the comics. It has already lost its novelty, it will lose its ability to lend realism, it will be useless as a form of punishment. Worse, when we finally become completely fed up with death, we'll be totally unwilling to look at any comic having to do with it, no matter how sensitive or exciting or well-written. It will become impossible to do dramatic or literate writing on the subject. And certainly, it will become numbingly, overwhelmingly boring; and inconceivably tedious ritual repeated over and over again.

Furthermore, though I personally don't think that it's going to warp malleable young minds, it's all too possible to imagine a well-intentioned but near-retarded consumer's group coming to the opposite conclusion. It would be horrible if comics again became the scapegoat for juvenile delinquency, or national violence, or the rising murder rate. Do you really want our comics censored by these sort of people? Do you want the powers of the Comics Code expanded to include editorial judgements and revisions?

Better than that would be self-imposed boundaries of good taste and careful restraint, which couldn't help but improve the over-all quality of the

DEATH CHRONOLOGY:

This is an attempt to list all the permanent, significant deaths in Silver Age Comics. There is a certain amount of subjectivity involved in defining all of those terms, Thanks to Murray Ward and Cat Yronwode for their help with this. Additions and corrections are always welcame.

1961: Ice Cream Soldier (Earth-Two? Revived?) OUR ARMY AT WAR No. 107, 6/61; reprinted in #216 with Ice Cream's name changed.
1963: Proty (Chameleon Boy's pet) ADVENTURE COMICS No. 312, 9/63; reprinted in #403.
Junior Juniper -- SGT. FURY No. 4, 11/63; reprinted in SGT. FURY ANNUAL #1.
1964: Bucky (flashback) AVENGERS No. 4, 3/64; reprinted in the paperback CAPTAIN AMERICA, Pocket Books, 1979, and several other places.
Alfred Pennyworth (brought back to life in 1966) DETECTIVE COMICS No. 328, 6/64.
Franklin Storm (Sue and Johnny's father) FANTASTIC FOUR No. 32, 11/64; reprinted in MARVEL'S GREATEST COMICS No. 24, 2/69.
1965: Baron Zemo -- AVENGERS No. 15, 4/65; reprinted in MARVEL TRIPLE ACTION No. 9.
Lady Pam Hawley (Nick Fury's girlfriend) SGT. FURY No. 18, 5/65; reprinted in SGT. FURY SPECIAL No. 6 and in WAR IS HELL No. 8.
Mark Merlin -- HOUSE OF SECRETS No. 73, 7-8/65
1966: Menthor -- THUNDER AGENTS No. 7, 8/66; reprinted in #18.
1967: Ferro Lad -- ADVENTURE COMICS No. 353, 2/67; reprinted in DC SPECIAL BLUE RIBBON DIGEST No. 1.
Frederick Foswell -- AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 52, 9/67; reprinted in MARVEL TALES No. 37.
1968: Robotman, Negative Man, Elasti-Girl and The Chief (Robotman and the team name revived in 1977) DOOM PATROL No. 121, 9-10/68.
1969: Medic Una (Captain Marvel's girlfriend) CAPTAIN MARVEL No. 11, 3/69.
Toro (rumored to be revived in the near future) SUB-MARINER No. 14, 6/69
Larry Lance (Earth-Two detective, Black Canary's husband) JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA No. 74, 10/69.
1970: Lord Seth (Namor's naval commander) SUB-MARINER No. 21, 1/70.
Janice Cord (Tony Stark's girlfriend) IRON MAN No. 22, 2/70.
Captain Stacy (Gwen's father) AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 90, 11/70; reprinted in MARVEL TREASURY EDITION No. 1 and in MARVEL TALES No. 71.
1971: Lady Dorma (Namor's girlfriend) SUB-MARINER No. 37, 5/71.
1972: Kevin O'Brian (The Guardsman, Iron Man's confidant) IRON MAN No. 46, 5/72.
Namora (Namor's cousin/ally) mentioned as a past occurance in SUB-MARINER No. 50, 6/72.
Wing (Crimson Avenger's sidekick) flashback in JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA No. 102, 10/72.
Fritz The Cat -- THE PEOPLE'S COMICS, 1972.
1973: Eddie Roberts (Warlock's friend) WARLOCK No. 4, 2/73
I-Ching -- WONDER WOMAN No. 204, 2-3/73.
Mimic -- THE INCREDIBLE HULK No. 161, 3/73.
Gwen Stacy -- THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 121, 6/73; reprinted in MARVEL TALES No. 98.
Green Goblin -- THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 122, 7/73; reprinted in MARVEL TALES No. 99.
Arch (Haunted Tank crew member) G.I. COMBAT No. 162, 7/73.
Kid Cassidy -- GUNHAWKS No. 6, 8/73.
The Deadly Dozen (All twelve killed in action) COMBAT KELLY No. 9, 10/73.
Plastic Man and the Blackhawks (of Earth-X) flashback in JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA No. 107, 10/73.
The Ancient One (reborn on a higher plane) MARVEL PREMIERE No. 10, 10/73; reprinted in MARVEL TREASURY EDITION No. 6.

1974: Patrick McShane (Shanna's boyfriend) flashback in DAREDEVIL No. 111, 7/74
Invisible Kid -- SUPERBOY AND THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES No. 204, 7-8/74.
Miss America -- flashback in GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS No. 1, 8/24.
Manhunter (Earth-One) DETECTIVE COMICS No. 443, 10-11/74.
Swordsman -- GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS No. 2, 11/74.
1975: Ina and Biri (Shanna's pet leopards) and
Jakuna Singh (Shanna's S.H.E.I.L.D. liason) SAVAGE TALES No. 9, 3/75.
Betty Dean (Sub-mariner's ex-girlfriend) SUPER-VILLAIN TEAM-UP No. 2, 10/75.
Thunderbird -- THE X-MEN No. 95, 10/75.
1976: Hawk (Killraven's friend) and Grok (Carmilla Frost's father-clone/pet) AMAZING ADVENTURES No. 34, 1/76
Top -- THE FLASH No. 243, 8/76.
Obi-Wan Kenobi (movie adaptation) STAR WARS No. 4, 10/76; reprinted in several places.
Jarella (Hulk's girlfriend) THE INCREDIBLE HULK No. 205, 11/76.
1977: Chuck (Earth-One) BLACKHAWK No. 250, 1-2/77.
Larner -- MASTER OF KUNG FU No. 49, 2/77
Matt Savage (Scalphunter's father) WEIRD WESTERN TALES No. 39, 3-4/77.
Bryndon Smith (one of the Atomic Knights) HERCULES UNBOUND No. 10, 4-5/77.
Chemical King -- SUPERBOY AND THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES No. 228, 7-8/77.
Aquababy -- ADVENTURE COMICS No. 452, 7-8/77
Spirit of '76 (member of the Crusaders) flashback in WHAT IF? No. 4, 8/77.
Stuff (Vigilante's sidekick) WORLD'S FINEST COMICS No. 246, 8-9/77
Doll Girl (Doll Man's partner/girlfriend) flashback in FREEDOM FIGHTERS No. 10, 9-10/77.
John Nedley (James-Michael's friend) and Omega -- OMEGA THE UNKNOWN No. 10, 10/77.
Gamora, Pip and Warlock -- AVENGERS ANNUAL #7, 11/77.
1978: Bloodstone -- THE RAMPAGING HULK No. 8, 4/78.
Balder (sort of) THOR No. 274, 8/78.
Jonah Hex ("flashahead") JONAH HEX SPECTACULAR [DC SPECIAL SERIES No. 16, Fall/78].
Steve Trevor (will be revived this year) WONDER WOMAN No. 248, 10/78
1979: Batman (Earth-Two) ADVENTURE COMICS No. 461, 1/2/79
Sindella (Zatara's wife, Zatanna's mother) JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA No. 165, 4/79.
Satana -- MARVEL TEAM-UP No. 81, 5/79.
Belit, M'Gora and the Black Corsairs -- CONAN THE BARBARIAN No. 100, 7/79.
Quincy Harker -- TOMB OF DRACULA No. 70, 7/79.
Iris Allen -- THE FLASH No. 275, 7/79.
Serina (television adaptation) BATTLESTAR GALACTICA No. 5, 7/79; reprinted in Ace paperback collection #2.
Deathlok (may be revived) MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE No. 54, 8/79.
Batwoman -- DETECTIVE COMICS No. 485, 8/9/79
Sharon Carter -- CAPTAIN AMERICA No. 237, 9/79.
Mr. Terrific -- JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA No. 171, 10/79.

comic anyway. It's easy to think of some common-sense guidelines to start with.

For example, a comic's readership is said to turn over completely every two to three years. It seems reasonable, then, that a publisher should try to limit VERY major deaths to one every two and a half years or so. Just enough to keep that possibility humming in the back of the reader's mind.

As far as individual series go, one death should last a long time. It's hard to make a guess on this one, but ten years or so seems a good interval between fatalities. This isn't really as long as it sounds like; again, it's just enough to keep that reality on the outer verge of consciousness, particularly if an occasional reference is made to the departed (not too unlikely, when you think about it).

There's got to be a lot less use of death as a form of punishing criminals. If a villain survives a "punitive death," then he should still pay SOME penalty for his crime. It also seems that if you ARE going to kill off a villain, you should give SOME thought to his eventual revival -- otherwise, future writers will have to come up with COMPLETELY outlandish explanations for the villain's survival, or, as sometimes happens, no explanation at all.

And there's one "rule" that everybody would agree on: Once a hero or supporting character is killed, they should never, never be brought to life again. If the whole thing is a pre-planned hoax, then it shouldn't be carried out to ridiculous extremes and go on more than a month or two.

Which means, consequently, that before a writer decides to kill anybody, he's got to first make sure that there'll be no further use for the character ever. Consider The Spectre, who was "permanently" killed in JUSTICE LEAGUE and later came back to star in his own series. (Actually, though, that revival -- unlike the series itself -- wasn't in

SUCH bad taste -- The Spectre was dead to begin with. And there is some question as to whether both characters were the same person.)

Now, slavish adherance to these or any other guidelines would produce clockwork deaths as dull and awful as the scattershot murders we suffer through now; or worse, a short-sighted editor might kill a GOOD death story because it had come too soon after a poor one. Therefore, the good taste of the writers and editors will always be the deciding factor.

Let's hope we see less of an emphasis on death as a means toward suspense or tension. You can, after all, write all sorts of interesting stories about people that have nothing at all to do with fatalities or even with fist-fighting. Let's see more stories that concern themselves with the human spirit and real, live LIVING people.

Et Al

For your information, the STAR HAWKS in this issue are the beginning of the ghosted period, and the artists

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DOORWAY TO NIGHTMARE #1 (Page #'s from lower right hand corner of art). Val Mayerik signed pages!! P. 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Better hurry on these pages !!

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did the following: Gil Kane did 12/27/78 to 12/31/78, plus 1/7 and 1/14/79; Howard Chaykin did 1/1/79 to 1/6/79; and Ernie Colon did 1/8 to 1/13, then 1/15 to 1/23/79. (What's interesting is a comparison of Raker's positioning in the last panel of 12/31 by Kane and 1/1/79 by Chaykin -- different interpretations of the same script.)

DC Coming Attractions

ALL-OUT WAR No. 6, July-August. In the final issue, the Viking Commando finds himself fighting a war in the distant future in "War Without A Name" by Robert Kanigher and George Evans. Plus, Black Eagle stars in "Bull's-Eye" by Kanigher, Dick Ayers and Romeo Tanghal and Force Three appears in "The Double Death of Adolf Hitler" by Kanigher and Jerry Grandenetti. Two non-series stories are also featured: "Hard-Hat Heroes" by Evan Douglas and Bill Payne, and "Zero Hour is 27 Years Long" by Jan Laurie and Jess Jodloman. Joe Kubert did the cover. [4/8]

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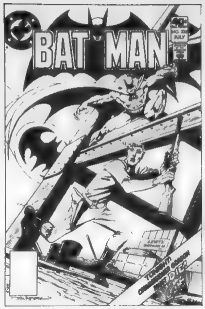
BATMAN No. 325, July. "Death -- Twenty Stories High" is by Roger McKenzie, Irv Novick and Steve Mitchell. A deadly sniper takes aim at Gotham, and Batman doesn't know his target. Jim Aparo did the cover. [4/8]

DC SPECIAL BLUE-RIBBON DIGEST No. 3, July-August. The Justice Society of America star in this digest collection of reprints and a story from ALL-STAR #36 is the highlight, as it involved the only appearance of the Earth-Two Superman and Batman in a JSA adventure. "The Five Drowned Men" is by Gardner Fox, Lee Elias, Irwin Hasen, Frank Lanning and Joe Kubert. Also featured are "The Revenge of Brain Wave" and



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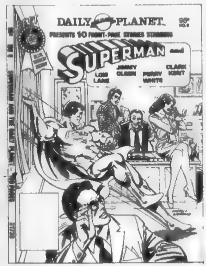
"Brain Wave Blows Up" by Gerry Conway, Ric Estrada and Wally Wood, and the Doctor Fate 1ST ISSUE SPECIAL issue, "The Mummy That Time Forgot" by Martin Pasko and Walt Simonson. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the orginal cover, with the vignettes by Irwin Hasen and Mike Grell. [4/8]

DC COMICS PRESENTS No. 23, July. "The Curse Out of Time" is by Denny O'Neil, Joe Staton and Vince Colletta. Superman is enslaved by a bewitched buccaneer and Dr. Fate is enlisted to help. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/8]



THE BEST OF DC No. 6, July-August. The focus is on the Daily Planet in this issue, and stories from the Superman family of titles include: "How Lois Lane Got Her Job" by Otto Binder and Kurt Schaffenberger (from LOIS LANE #17), "Jimmy Olsen's 1000th Scoop" by Curt Swan and John Forte (from JIMMY OLSEN #51), "The Last Headline" by Marty Pasko, Curt Swan and Tex Blaisdell (from SUPERMAN #280), "Clark Kent's Masquerade As Superman" by Al Plastino (ACTION #331),

"Jimmy Olsen, Editor In Chief" by Curt Swan and George Klein (JIMMY OLSEN #63), "Dear Dr. Cupid" by Jerry Siegel and Kurt Schaffenberger (LOIS LANE #45), "The Super-Cigars of Perry White" (ACTION #436) by Elliot Maggin, Curt Swan and Vince Colletta, "Clark Kent, Gentleman Journalist" (SUPERMAN #85), "The Superman Spectacular." (ACTION #211) and "The End of the Planet" (SUPERMAN #79). Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/8]

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THE FLASH No. 287, July. "Dr. Alchemy And Mr. Desmond" is by Cary Bates, Don Heck and Frank Chiaramonte. The schizoid personality of Al Desmond -- who's also Mr. Element -- comes to the surface once again. Heck and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/8]

GHOSTS No. 90, July. In this issue: "The Ghost Galleon" by George Kashdan, Jack Sparling and Vince Colletta; "Phantom of the Disco" by Kashdan, Charles Nicholas and Colletta; and "How To Outwit A Phantom" by Carl

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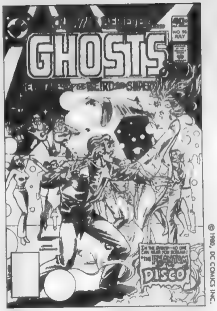
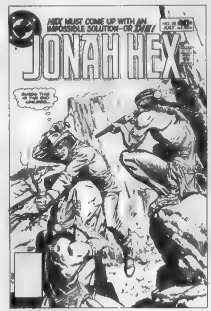


Wessler, Sparling and Colletta. Jimmy Janes and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/8]

JONAH HEX No. 38, July. "Iron Dog's Gold" is by Michael Fleisher and Dan Spiegle. Jonah is forced to lead a gang of desperados into a hidden valley which contains mountains of gold. Luis Dominguez did the cover. [4/8]

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA No. 180, July. "A Beautiful Evil" is by Gerry Conway, Dick Dillin and Frank McLaughlin. The Satin Satan captures new member Firestorm and uses him to control the JLA. Jim Starlin did the

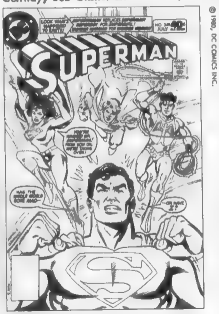


cover. [4/8]

SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE No. 26, July. Featured stories: "Elevator To Oblivion" by Valerie Owen and Amado Castrillo; "Last Train To Eternity" by George Kashdan, Charles Nicholas and Vince Colletta; and "Mikey's Friend" by J.M. DeMatteis, Nicholas and Armando Gil. Marshall Rogers did the cover. [4/8]

SUPERMAN No. 349, July. "The Turnabout Trap" is by Martin Pasko, Curt Swan and Frank Chiaramonte. Superman returns to Metropolis from space to find that the Daily Planet is populated by Louis Lane, Jenny Olsen and Clara Kent, and the JLA members are Wonder Warrior, Batwoman, Black Condor, a female Flash -- plus Superwoman and Superboy. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/8]

THE SUPERMAN FAMILY No. 202, July-August. Supergirl meets a villain called Dynamic in "The Dynamic Duel" by Jack C. Harris, Winslow Mortimer and Vince Colletta; Mr. And Mrs. Superman discover the "Man Who Discovered Kryptonite" by E. Nelson Bridwell, Kurt Schaffenberger and Joe Giella; Clark Kent serves on a jury in "Beyond A Reasonable Doubt" by Bob Rozakis, John Calnan and Frank Chiaramonte; Lois Lane joins the ballet in "Swan Dance For A Girl Reporter" by Gerry Conway, Bob Oksner and Colletta; and



Jimmy Olsen rounds things out in "The Reporter Nobody Knows" by Conway, Alex Saviuk and Giella. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/8]

WEIRD WAR TALES No. 89, July. In this issue: "Primate Patrol" by George Kashdan, Ken Landgraf and Dave Simons; "The Ship That Shall Be Your Coffin" by Kashdan and Ric Estrada; and "Death, The Dread Drummer" by Robert Kanigher and Ruben Yandoc. Jim Starlin did the cover. [4/8]

WONDER WOMAN No. 269, July. "Return To Paradise Island" is by Gerry Conway, Jose Delbo and Wally Wood. Here we go again -- WW ditches the man's world to return to the apparent sanity of Paradise Island. Watch for the return of Steve Trevor. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/8]

ACTION COMICS No. 509, July. "The Great Space-Travel Hoax" is by Cary Bates, Curt Swan and Frank Chiaramonte. A club that believes that all reported space travel is a lie conceals a deadly secret. Also, the 28 page RADIO SHACK supplement, "The Computers That Saved Metropolis" by Bates, Jim Starlin and Dick Giordano is included. Ross Andru and Giordano did the cover. [4/22]

ADVENTURE COMICS No. 473, July. Starman leads off in "Twixt Hammer and Anvil" by Paul Levitz, Steve Ditko and Romeo Tanghal. Starman discovers the deadly secret of the ship that kidnapped his sister. Also, Plastic Man stars in "Midway Madness" by Marty Pasko, Joe Staton and Bob Smith. The battle with Lowbrow continues. [4/22]

THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD No. 164, July. "Mystery of the Mobile Museum" is by J.M. DeMatteis and Jose Luis Garcia Lopez. Batman and Hawkman find mystery and terror in a museum. Jim Aparo did the cover. [4/22]

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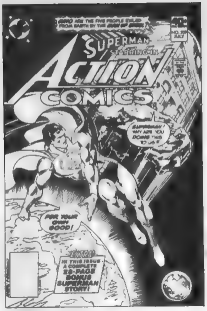

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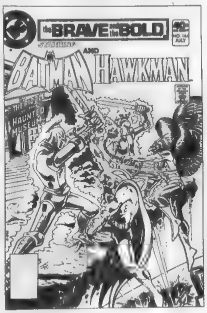
DETECTIVE COMICS No. 492, July. "The Vengeance Trail" is by Cary Burkett, Dan Newton and Dan Adkins. So soon after avenging Batwoman's death, Batman may have to do the same for Batgirl. Prior to that, though, Batgirl managed to have a tale of her own, "At War With General Scar" by Burkett, Newton and Bob Smith. Robin stars in "The First Bird" by Jack C. Harris, Charles Nicholas and Vince Colletta; Man-Bat solos in "We Are Experiencing a Slight Delay" by Bob Rozakis, Romeo Tanghal and Colletta; and another Tale of Gotham City fin-



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ishes things up, "Fifty Million Tons of Soul" by Bob Haney and Bob Oksner. Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/22]

GREEN LANTERN No. 130, July. "Sonar's Sonic-Atomic Attack" is by Bob Rozakis, Joe Staton and Frank McLaughlin. Sonar returns and purchases jets from Ferris aircraft -- legally. Also, Tales of the Green Lantern Corps returns with "The Trial of Arkkis Chummuck" by Bob Toomey, Alex Saviuk and Augi Scotto. An alien GL charged with murder is brought before a Guardian tribunal. Brian Boiland did the cover. [4/22]

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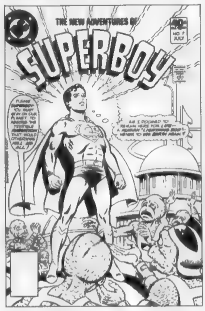
HOUSE OF MYSTERY No. 282, July. Stories in this issue: "Somewhere Where The Sun Don't Shine" by Bob Ingersoll and Mike Sekowsky; "I'm Off To My Funeral" by George Kashdan and Mar Amongo; and "The Lady Killer Craves Blood" by J.M. DeMatteis and Gerry Talaoc. Plus: the 28-page SUPERMAN story detailed in ACTION #509. Joe Kubert did the cover. [4/22]

THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES No. 265, July. "The Brigadoon Syndrome" is by Gerry Conway, J.M. DeMatteis, Jimmy Janes and Dave Hunt. The origin of Tyroc and his people are explained more fully. Also: the 28-page SUPERMAN story detailed in ACTION #509. Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/22]



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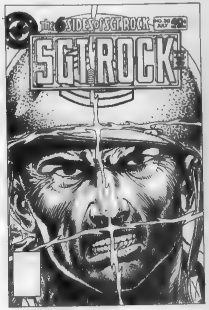
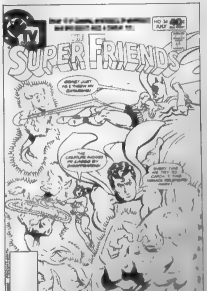
THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY No. 7, July. "This Planet Is Condemned" is by Cary Bates, Kurt Schaffenberger and Dave Hunt. Superboy lands on a planet then finds he cannot leave without dooming the entire world populace. Also: the 28 page SUPERMAN story detailed in ACTION #509. Schaffenberger and Hunt did the cover. [4/22]



SGT. ROCK No. 342, July. "The Six Sides of Sgt. Rock" is by Robert Kanigher and Frank Redondo. A reporter tags along with Easy to get the lowdown on the legendary sergeant. Also, "Talisman" is by Dick Ayers and Ric Estrada. Joe Kubert did the cover. [4/22]

SUPER FRIENDS No. 34, July. "The Creature That Slept A Million Years" is by E. Nelson Bridwell, Ramona Fradon and Vince Colletta. The Super Friends accidentally awaken a creature that can teleport himself anywhere. Also, the Wonder Twins appear in "The Boss And the Beast" by Bridwell, Fradon and Colletta. Fradon and Bob Smith did the cover. [4/22]



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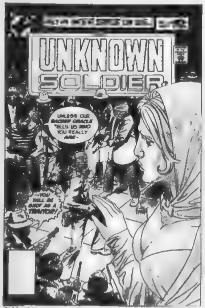
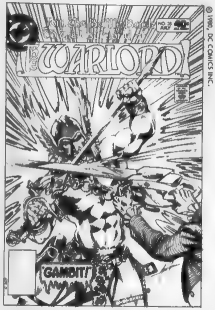
THE UNEXPECTED No. 200, July. Not, as first reported, a dollar comic, this regular sized issue does have a special JOHNNY PERIL strip, "The House On The Edge of Eternity" by Mike Barr, George Tuska and Bob Smith. Johnny investigates the strange disappearance of a millionaire in front of a room full of witnesses. Also, "Never Betray A Witch" by George Kashdan and Jack Abel, and "Summer Camp" by J.M. DeMatteis and Ernie Patricio



fill the issue. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/22]

UNKNOWN SOLDIER No. 241, July. "Shall Heroes Prevail?" is by Bob Haney, Dick Ayers and Gerry Talaoc. The Unknown Soldier disguises himself as a Greek collaborator to accomplish his mission. Joe Kubert did the cover. [4/22]

THE UNTOLD LEGEND OF THE BATMAN No. 1, July. "The Origin of The Batman" is brought to you by Len Wein, John Byrne and Jim Aparo. The origin story begins in the first of three issues, but includes many untold and scattered events not gathered together before. For example: Who brought up Bruce Wayne after his parents were shot? Jose Luis Garcia Lopez did the cover. [4/22]



WARLORD No. 35, July. "Gambit" is by Mike Grell and Bob Smith. Travis attempts to reach Skartaris again but finds himself caught in a strange world -- filled with guest stars. Grell did the cover. [4/22]

WEIRD WESTERN TALES No. 69, July. "The Lady In Blue" is by Gerry Conway, Dick Ayers and Romeo Tanghal. The penultimate issue of this magazine sees Scalphunter cross paths with a female cavalryman. Luis Dominguez did the cover. [4/22]

Marvel Coming Co[illegible]s

DAREDEVIL No. 165, July. "The Arms of the Octopus" is by Roger McKenzie, Frank Miller and Klaus Janson. DD faces Doc Ock and his new Adamantium arms. Miller and Janson did the cover. [4/1]

MARVEL SUPER-HEROES No. 89, July. "Many Foes Has The Hulk" by Roy Thomas, Herb Trimpe and Sam Grainger is reprinted. Trimpe did the cover. [4/1]

MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE No. 65, July. "Serpents From The Sea" is by Mark Gruenwald, Ralph Macchio, George Perez and Gene Day. The Thing, Triton and Stingray run a death race to the bottom of the sea to retrieve the brain-bending Serpent Crown before the Serpent Squad does. Perez and Day did the cover. [4/1]

MARVEL TREASURY EDITION No. 26, July. This issue spotlights the Hulk, and features: "To Destroy The Monster," "The Hate of the Harpy," "Calamity In The Clouds" and "Death From On High" all by Steve Englehart, Herb Trimpe and Jack Abel. Plus, a new Wolverine and Hercules tale by Mary Jo Duffy, Ken Landgraf and George Perez. Ron Wilson and Pablo Marcos did the front cover, Bob Budiansky did the back cover. [4/1]

THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN No. 53, June. "The Sorcerer and the Soul" is by Roy Thomas, John Buscema and Rudy Nebres. Part one of a three-part adaptation of Andrew Offutt's novel, "Conan And The Sorcerer" is presented, plus Solomon Kane stars in "Wings In The Night" by Don Glut and Dave Wenzel. Earl Norem did the cover. [4/1]

SHOGUN WARRIORS No. 18, July. "The Chaos Wars Squared" is by Doug Moench, Herb Trimpe and Mike Esposito. The battle with Demonicus continues. Trimpe and Esposito did the cover. [4/1]

SPIDER-WOMAN No. 28, July. "That Scotty Should Not Die" is by Michael Fleisher, Jerry Bingham and Mike Esposito. Spider-Woman allies herself with The Enforcer to save Scotty's life. Bill Sienkiewicz and Josef Rubinstein did the cover. [4/1]

SPIDEY SUPER STORIES No. 47, July. [4/1]

STAR TREK No. 4, July. "The Haunting of Thallus" is by Marv Wolfman, Dave Cockrum and Klaus Janson. The Enterprise comes across the Haunted House of Space. Cockrum and Janson did the cover. [4/1]

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 206, July. "Method In His Madness" is by

Roger Stern, John Byrne and Gene Day. Spider-Man encounters Dr. Jonas Harrow for the first time and JJJ's psychoses are revealed. Al Milgrom did the cover. [4/8]

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA No. 17, July. "Apes and Essence" is by Steven Grant, Walt Simonson and Klaus Janson. The crew of the Galactica, faced with starvation when one of their Argo-ships is destroyed, land on a planet where people turn into apes. Simonson and Janson did the cover. [4/8]

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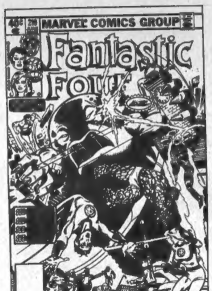
CAPTAIN AMERICA No. 247, July. "By The Dawn's Early Light" is by Roger Stern, John Byrne and Joe Rubinstein. Baron Strucker returns and exactly how he managed to survive the destruction of Hydra Island is revealed. Plus: Roger says he clears up the discrepancies between the Gerber origin and the traditional origin. Honest. Byrne and Rubinstein did the cover. [4/8]

CRAZY No. 63, July. Now edited by Larry Hama, with stuff you might actually want to look at. [4/8]

FUN AND GAMES MAGAZINE No. 11, July. Games and puzzles from Owen McCarron. McCarron did the cover. [4/8]

GHOST RIDER No. 46, July. "The End of A Champion" is by Michael Fleisher and Don Perlin. Johnny Blaze's stunt-cycling records are challenged and beaten by Flag Fargo. Bob Budiansky and Bob Wiacek did the cover. [4/8]

THE MICRONAUTS No. 19, July. "Divided They Fall" is by Bill Mantlo, Pat Broderick and Armando Gil. Unaware that they are back on Earth, the Micronauts split up to investigate and Bug falls prey to Odd John, a crazed entymologist. Mike Golden did the cover. [4/8]



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THE SAVAGE SHE-HULK No. 6, July. "Enter Iron Man" is by David Kraft, Mike Vosburg and Chic Stone. Iron Man, believing her to be a muderer at large, pursues the She-Hulk, while Jennifer Walters, believing him to be head of a criminal organization, goes after Tony Stark in court. Bob Layton did the cover. [4/8]

THOR No. 297, July. This issue is by Roy Thomas, Keith Pollard and Chic Stone. Odin wants to punish Valkyrie for disobeying his edict to kill Thor. Pollard did the cover. [4/8]

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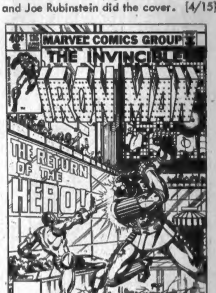
THE TOMB OF DRACULA No. 5, July. "Sanctuary" is by Roger McKenzie, Gene Colan and Dave Simons. Dracula unleashes his wrath upon the renegade vampires. Lilith appears in "Daughter of Death" by Ralph Macchio, Lynn Graeme, Gene Colan and Tom Palmer. Lilith and her father confront each other after 500 years. Howard Chaykin did the cover. [4/8]

THE AVENGERS No. 197, July. "Prelude of the War-Devil" is by David Michelinie, Carmine Infantino and Dan Green. This issue: a visit with the Avengers on their day off. George Perez and Green did the cover. [4/15]

CONAN THE BARBARIAN No. 112, July. The fight against the bear god continues in this issue by Roy Thomas, John Buscema and Ernie Chan, as Conan has all he can (up!) bear. Buscema and Joe Rubinstein did the cover. [4/15]



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THE DAZZLER No. 1, July. "So Bright This Star" is by Tom DeFalco, John Romita, Jr. and Alfredo Alcala. The Dazzler auditions for the lead spot in a posh New York City disco, but her competition is The Enchantress. Bob Larkin did the cover (which was the painting originally intended for the issue of MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL originally planned). [4/15]

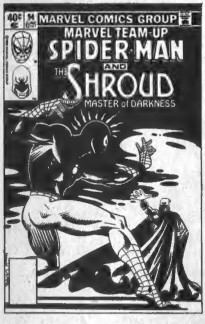
FANTASY MASTERPIECES No. 8, July. Indications are that this will remain a 75¢ book with "Now Strikes The Ghost" and "...To Steal The Surfer's Soul" from SILVER SURFER #8 and 9, by Stan Lee, John Buscema and Dan Adkins, combined (as they were originally intended anyway). It is possible that the Watcher stories could take up the back of the book, though. Buscema and Adkins did the cover. [4/15]

THE HULK! No.21, July. "Into The Myth Realm" is by Doug Moench and Bob McLeod. A magical kingdom tests the Hulk's power. Plus, Dominic Fortune debuts in "The All-In-Color-For-A Crime Resolution" by Dennis O'Neil and Howard Chaykin. Bob Larkin did the cover. [4/15]

THE INCREDIBLE HULK No. 249, July. "Jack Frost Nipping At Your Soul" is by Bill Mantlo and Steve Ditko. The Hulk battles the icy powers of Jack

Frost, formerly The Blizzard. Ditko did the cover. [4/15]

MAN-THING No. 5, July. "Who Knows Fear?" is by Chris Claremont, Don Perlin and Bob Wiacek. A young, rich and spoiled heiress is kidnapped



by pirates and Man-Thing gets involved. Wiacek did the cover. [4/15]

MARVEL'S GREATEST COMICS No. 90, July. Reprinted from FANTASTIC FOUR #110 is "One From Four Leaves Three" by Stan Lee, John Buscema and Joe Sinnott. [4/15]

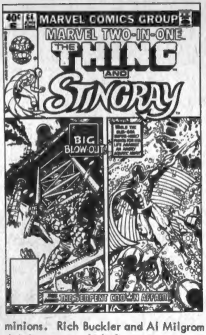
MARVEL TALES No. 117, July. "... And One Must Fall" by Gerry Conway, Ross Andru, Frank Giacoia and Dave Hunt, is reprinted from AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #140. Gil Kane and John Romita did the cover. [4/15]

ROM No. 8, July. "Deathwing" is by Bill Mantlo and Sal Buscema. Rom crashes a Dire Wraith party in an attempt to recapture his neutralizer. Mike Golden did the cover. [4/15]

TALES TO ASTONISH No. 8, July. From SUB-MARINER #8 comes "In The Rage of Battle" by Roy Thomas, John Buscema and Dan Adkins. [4/15]

AMAZING ADVENTURES No. 8, July. The second half of the "Brotherhood of Evil Mutants" story by Stan Lee, Jack Kirby and Paul Reinman is reprinted from X-MEN #4. Plus, the Iceman origin continues with "And The Mob Cried Vengeance" by Gary Friedrich, George Tuska and John Verpoorten. [4/22]

THE DEFENDERS No. 85, July. "Like A Proud Black Panther" is by Ed Hannigan, Dan Perlin and Jim Mooney. Black Panther joins Valkyrie, Hellcat and Clea in the fight against Mandrill's



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minions. Rich Buckler and Al Milgrom did the cover. [4/22]

FANTASTIC FOUR No. 220, July. "And The Light Went Out All Over The World" is by John Byrne (story and art) and Joe Sinnott. The story slated to appear as a Coca-Cola premium instead turns up here with the FF investigating an alien invasion in the frozen North. Joe Sinnott did the cover. [4/22]

IRON MAN No. 136, July. "Endotherm" is by David Michelinie, Alan Weiss and Bob Wiacek. Iron Man goes to London to confront a new villain. Bob Layton did the cover. [4/22]

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MARVEL SPOTLIGHT No. 7, July. "Tears For The World Called Heaven" is by Doug Moench and Tom Sutton. Star-Lord aids a fallen angel. Frank Miller and Bob Wiacek did the cover. [4/22]

MARVEL SUPER ACTION No. 21, July. "...Till Death Do Us Part" is by Roy Thomas, John Buscema and Mike Esposito and originally appeared in AVENGERS #60. [4/22]

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MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL No. 16, July. Red Sonja is the star of this issue's stories: the lead by Christy Marx and Tony DeZuniga, and the back-up, a retelling of Red Sonja's origin by Roy Thomas and Dick Giordano. (This replaces the scheduled Dazzler issue, bumped to its own book.) [4/22]

MARVEL TEAM-UP No. 95, July. "And No Birds Do Sing" is by Steven Grant, Jimmy Janes and Bruce Patterson. Mockingbird (nee The Huntress) must get to Nick Fury before SHIELD and Spider-Man do. Frank Miller and Bob McLeod did the cover. [4/22]

MASTER OF KUNG FU No. 90, July. "Triumphs of the Flesh" is by Doug Moench, Mike Zeck and Gene Day. The group returns to London to start up a new spy organization, but Shang-Chi and Liko return to New York where they get involved with a gang war in Chinatown. Zeck and Day did the cover. [4/22]

THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN No. 44, July. "The Vengeance Gambit" is by Marv Wolfman, Steve Leialoha and Al Gordon. Who is killing the great crime lords of New York? A mystery for Spider-Man. Al Milgrom and Joe Rubinstein did the cover. [4/22]

STAR WARS No. 37, July. "In Mortal Combat" is by Archie Goodwin, Carmine Infantino and Gene Day. Luke battles for his life in a duel engineered by Sister Domini. Infantino and Day did the cover. [4/22]

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